A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

New light on the attempt to assassinate Lenin

NEW TIMES

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FROM THE BLACK SEA TO THE ALPS: A NEW TIMES DANUBE EXPEDITION

1917–1987

TIME AND PEOPLE

"While you are alive, you must be awe stricken by the Emperor's great magnanimity. After your death you must become a guardian of the Japanese Empire. Then you will be surrounded with honour." Death itself was "lighter than a feather," a Japanese soldier's code of conduct said. The Kwantung Army, spearheaded against the U.S.S.R., comprised thousands of fanatical hand-picked soldiers. Late in the summer of 1938 it waged a "reconnaissance battle" near Lake Khasan, but was beaten back within days of the attack.

In 1939, the Japanese staged provocations against Mongolia on the Khalkhin-Gol River. The U.S.S.R. came to its neighbour's aid. The Japanese invaders were encircled and destroyed despite their fierce resistance. The victory marked the beginning of a long and brilliant military career for Georgi Zhukov who commanded the Soviet-Mongolian troops. Several top-ranking Japanese officers committed hara-kiri, while the others learned a hard lesson.

At that time, Germany and Italy were perpetrating more and more acts of brigandage with impunity. Paris and London turned a blind eye to Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 and Mussollini's occupation of Albania a month later. War was already on Europe's doorstep, but it could still be stopped by the joint efforts of the U.S.S.R., Britain and France. Moscow called for an effective agreement on mutual assistance. All Paris and London wanted, on the other hand, was to set Germany and the U.S.S.R. against each other while keeping themselves out of the conflict. Negotiations proceeded at a snail's pace.

At the end of July Moscow proposed that discussions be started in Moscow on the signing of a military convention. The fate of the world was at stake, and the matter brooked no delay. Nevertheless, the British and French missions took eleven days to prepare for the voyage and six days to reach the Soviet Union in a slow-speed ship. En route they enjoyed themselves playing table tennis. On their arrival it turned out that Admiral Drax, the leader of the British delegation, did not even have a mandate authorizing him to conduct the negotiations. His only instruction was: "Negotiate very slowly."

Despite this, the Soviet delegation set forth three variants of joint action. The Red Army was prepared to put up 120 infantry and 16 cavalry divisions, 5,000 heavy cannon, up to 10,000 tanks, and more than 5,000 planes. The partners in the negotiations responded with general statements and were reluctant to undertake specific commitments.

It became obvious that the talks were a sheer waste of time. Paris and London thought only of their own security and were marking time in the hope that the U.S.S.R. would be the first to take the German blow. Seeking to avoid the danger of having to fight on two fronts at once, the U.S.S.R. signed, on August 23, a non-aggression pact proposed by Berlin. In this way the Soviet Union secured an opportunity to prepare itself for repelling an aggression. This diplomatic move resulted in a split in the military alliance of the "axis powers." The Japanese government, which had not been informed about the pact in advance, made a strong protest to Germany and in the end had to resign. Rome voiced its deep displeasure over the pact, and Spain, too, resented Germany's action. The united front of the aggressors was weakened. It is hard to imagine what would have happened had the aggressors unleashed war all over the world simultaneously.

Georgi Zhukov and Khorloin Choibalsan, Commander-in-Chief of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army.

The building in Spiridonovka (now Alexei Tolstoi street) where talks between Soviet, British and French military missions were held.

The British mission en route to Moscow.

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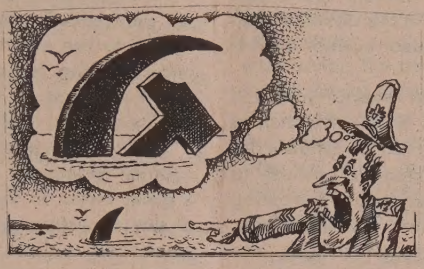

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OF MISSILE RANGES AND FARSIGHTEDNESS
A Soviet-American agreement on intermediate- and shorter-range missiles has almost materialized and seems to be within arm's reach. What prevents the sides from taking the final step? See an analysis by political journalist Valentin Falin.

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Geneva: time to act

Eduard Shevardnadze, member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., addressed the conference on disarmament in Geneva on August 6. This conference is a concentrated expression of the world community's effort to solve the foremost problem confronting mankind - the problem of eliminating the instruments of war.

In his speech Eduard Shevardnadze said:

Documents of vital importance for the future of the world were drawn up within these walls - the treaties on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and on non-emplacement of nuclear weapons on the seabed and the ocean floor, the conventions on the prohibition of bacteriological weapons and on the non-use of environmental modification techniques for military purposes. Remarkable by themselves as major landmarks in the development of international legal thinking, they have also added a new dimension to our common security.

They are proof of the possibility of a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world, of an era without wars and weapons, as described by Mikhail Gorbachev in his statement of January 15, 1986. In other words, they were, to some extent, a prelude to the conclusion reached by the Soviet leadership following a thorough analysis of the realities of the nuclear and space age.

I am absolutely sure that the conference, which put into practice the idea of nuclear non-proliferation, is aware of this danger.

Therefore when we say that a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world is the only reasonable alternative to the doctrine of deterrence, we hope for a sympathetic response.

Although some have described such a world as fantasy, it is already emerging before our very eyes. A mere two weeks ago, prior to Mikhail Gorbachev's interview to the Indonesian newspaper Merdeka, a nuclear-free world was more than 200 warheads farther away from us. And since Reykjavik that distance has become shorter by almost 2,000 warheads.

If I am asked why I am referring to this as something that has been accomplished, I will say that for the Soviet Union this is indeed so. For we have done all in our power, we have removed everything that could stand in the way of an agreement based on a "global double zero."

We have dropped the condition concerning the British and French nuclear forces. We have separated the issue of medium-range missiles from the problem of strategic and space arms even though we would prefer to discuss them together. We have called for the total elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles in Europe. Finally, we have arrived at the concept of a "global double zero," that is the total removal of two classes of nuclear weapons from Soviet and U.S. arsenals. It is no secret that the Soviet side would have to reduce a significantly greater number of missiles than the U.S. side.

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So, what is holding things up now, ladies and gentlemen?

Our partners have found the snags. The main one is Pershing 1A missiles.

They ask us why we have raised this issue now and not earlier.

Let me say this. The question of **what** and **when** the West knew about the Soviet position is utterly irrelevant in this particular case. After all, we are holding negotiations to decide what arms are to be eliminated.

What we are discussing, in effect, is which Soviet and U.S. nuclear systems with ranges between 500 and 1,000 km should be subject to elimination. The agreement in principle on that score states that all such systems without exception must be eliminated, which also means Pershing 1As.

If, however, someone has chosen to start a dispute about who those missiles belong to - well, then, we are quite prepared to discuss that point, too.

We would prefer to discuss it only at the negotiating table, but, instead, a public discussion is being thrust upon us in which we have to engage so that the crux of the matter and our position should not be distorted.

To begin with, we are negotiating with the United States, and we deal with Soviet and U.S. nuclear weapons only. Therefore, we fail to see any reason for the Federal Republic of Germany to intrude in the Soviet-U.S. negotiations. Why? By what right? Has it not assumed an obligation under the non-proliferation treaty not to acquire nuclear weapons?

We, too, have allies, who are concerned over a neighbouring country retaining shorter-range nuclear missiles which pose a great threat to their security. They could ask for the stationing of similar systems on their territories, and the Soviet Union could meet their request.

But what would a Soviet-U.S. agreement be like as a result of all this? It would be truncated, emasculated and anemic.

Over the past few days the opponents of the "zero solution" have found another argument to try to bolster their untenable position on the Pershing 1As. They are now saying that there is an imbalance in conventional and nuclear tactical arms in Europe and that therefore these missiles have to be retained.

But are Bonn and Washington not aware that the **Soviet leadership has been persistently calling for starting without delay negotiations to reduce conventional and nuclear tactical arms and eliminate any disparities or imbalances where they exist.**

If, as some U.S. administration officials and their West German partners contend, those notorious Pershing 1As are third country systems, then the question arises again: **why and by what right does that third country, namely, the Federal Republic of Germany, possess nuclear weapons? As far as we know, it has neither legal nor moral right to have them.**

But if it is deliberately trying to arrogate to itself such rights, if the F.R.G. has indeed illegally acquired nuclear weapons - then this would certainly cause anger and indignation in the world, and could confront the world with a political crisis.

We believe it is appropriate to ask the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany at this forum a straightforward question: **does his country have nuclear systems in its arsenal?** Equally legitimate is the question that we are addressing to the U.S. delegate: **who actually controls the nuclear warheads for the Pershing 1As.**

A great deal depends on the answer to these two questions.

The Soviet Union hopes that the Federal Republic of Germany will duly clarify the situation and remove the concerns now being felt by many European states because of the ambiguity of its position in regard to the Pershing 1A missiles.

We wish to make it perfectly clear that unless this is done, the Soviet Union will find the situation as it exists now unacceptable and will make known its view on that situation in a clear and unambiguous manner. **The Soviet people will never agree to the F.R.G. becoming a nuclear power.**

We should like to believe that the F.R.G. is well aware of all this and that the sober-minded forces standing up for détente, for

a large step to be made in nuclear disarmament would ultimately prevail. And we should also like to believe that the F.R.G. will not become an obstacle to the achievement of the historic agreement. In the meantime 72 U.S. nuclear warheads stand between us and an agreement on medium-range and shorter-range missiles.

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It is my privilege to inform you, upon instructions from the Soviet leadership, of the objectives which the Soviet Union is seeking to achieve. They include:

- the conclusion of treaties with the United States and of international agreements on the complete destruction of nuclear weapons worldwide;
- a strict and universal ban on deployment of any arms in outer space;
- the establishment of an international regime under which there will be no chemical weapons or other types of weapons of mass destruction in the world;
- the reduction of conventional weapons to the lowest possible levels required for defence;
- the establishment, on the basis of cooperation among all states in the world, of a comprehensive system of international security, under which the United Nations could, in accordance with its Charter, effectively maintain peace and security.

Allow me to outline to you the sequence of our practical actions to achieve these objectives.

First. At the negotiations on nuclear and space arms the Soviet delegation has been instructed to proceed from the "global double zero" formula. Agreement has been reached to hold a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State in mid-September, as a separate event not linked to the session of the U.N. General Assembly.

Second. At the Geneva talks we have submitted a draft treaty on the 50 per cent reduction in strategic arms and a draft agreement on strengthening the regime of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. These are compromise drafts taking into account and seeking to accommodate the positions of the other side.

Third. The Soviet side has co-sponsored, together with other socialist countries, and submitted to the Conference on Disarmament for its consideration a document entitled Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Prohibition of Nuclear-Weapon Testing. We have put forward an initiative concerning the establishment of an international verification system to prevent the deployment of any weapons in outer space.

Fourth. A proposal by a group of socialist countries to establish a comprehensive system of international peace and security is being discussed at the United Nations.

I would like to dwell specifically on the question of verification and its fundamental and practical aspects.

The experience of the past few years has shown that there is verification spoken of for propaganda purposes, and there is real, permanent verification.

Now, I would say **that the very philosophy underlying our approach to the problem of real verification gives a particularly full and clear idea of the evolution of our outlook, which has now developed into a system of unorthodox political views, in other words, into a new political thinking.**

We establish a strong link between nuclear arms reductions - at this stage, reductions in intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles - and an accord on measures of verification.

They include an exchange of initial data concerning the two sides' missiles and verification of such data through on-site inspections. We insist on a continuous monitoring of the process of destroying the missiles. The elimination of the relevant production base and infrastructure will also be subject to verification.

The system of verification that we propose is designed to create an atmosphere of absolute confidence that the agreement is not circumvented in any way.

And finally, **we believe that there should be mandatory access to Soviet and U.S. military facilities in third countries where missiles could be stationed.**

In our opinion, verification will have a particularly important role to play in preventing an arms race in space.

All states engaged in space activities would be placed in an absolutely equal position, and permanent monitoring by inspectors would guarantee the reliability of verification. After all, a space launch complex is something that cannot be hidden. In this case the technology itself ensures a relative simplicity of verification and its effectiveness. Furthermore, our proposal provides for the right to conduct an on-site inspection should suspicion arise that a launch was carried out from an undeclared launch site.

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I would like to make a few comments about one of the long-sought goals which is within reach and which the Conference on Disarmament has almost attained.

What we have in mind is an event of great universal significance - a complete ban on chemical weapons and the elimination of their stockpiles.

I am instructed to inform you that the Soviet delegation at the negotiations on this question **will proceed from the need to make legally binding the principle of mandatory challenge inspections without right to refusal.** This decision is another vivid manifestation of our commitment to genuine and effective verification, in accordance with the principles of new political thinking.

In order to create an atmosphere of trust and in the interestrs of an early conclusion of an international convention, **the Soviet side invites the participants in the chemical weapons negotiations to the Soviet military facility at Shikhany to see standard items of our chemical weapons and make themselves familiar with the technology of destroying chemical weapons at a mobile facility. We will later invite experts to the specialized plant for the destruction of chemical weapons now being built in the vicinity of the town of Chapayevsk.**

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Today, as never before, the most pressing problems of the contemporary world determine the role and importance of the conference. In fulfilling its mission **this representative conference** can assert itself more forcefully by practical deeds matching the magnitude of the tasks before it.

There may be a need to consider the possibility of adopting a more intensive schedule of work. We would consider favourably a year-round schedule for the conference with two or three recesses.

Why not hold an additional session of the conference this year to complete most of the drafting of the convention banning chemical weapons?

Why are we talking about the need to intensify the work of the conference? Because the negotiating machinery is running at a rate that is significantly slower than the pace of the arms race. A dangerous gap is emerging between political thought and political will, and military technology. This is evident from the records of the conference, too. It has been fifteen years since the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons, and the convention banning military use of environmental modification techniques was worked out in 1977.

The Soviet Union regards improvement in the functioning of the Geneva forum as one way of redressing this disparity. We believe that in time the conference could become a permanent universal body for disarmament negotiations.

And, of course, the Conference on Disarmament should not get used to the fact that the questions of ending the nuclear arms race, though they appear on its agenda, are actually not discussed here. Indeed, these issues should be made the focus of its activity. Today there is no other way. Nuclear disarmament should not be a matter to be tackled by just a few powers. No government can stand on the sidelines in this matter, for the nuclear threat is global in its consequences. Those consequences transcend national boundaries and ideological differences. They do not recognize neutrality and they would spare no one.

If that is so, it is unfair to keep non-nuclear states from participating in solving the problems of nuclear disarmament. As Mikhail Gorbachev has repeatedly emphasized, a maximum degree of internationalization is needed in these efforts. Genuine democratism and humanism in international relations call for precisely such an approach.

THE COLOURS OF THE DANUBE

The Danube, the longest waterway in Europe after the Volga, winds its way across almost the entire breadth of the continent. There are some 80 million people living in its basin. Six of the eight states on its banks are socialist. The Danube was a river of discord and internecine strife until the comparatively recent past. But seventy years ago the October revolution proclaimed and asserted a new philosophy of international relations - the philosophy of peaceful coexistence and mutual trust between states with different social systems. The Danube now offers an example of how complex problems can be resolved through mutually advantageous cooperation, and much of the credit for this goes to the socialist nations. Specifically, it was in the capital of a socialist country, Yugoslavia, that the international Danube Convention was signed and it is in the capital of another socialist state, Hungary, that the Danube Commission has its headquarters.

The problems of the Danube and of economic cooperation and political interaction between the nations that lie along the river, are multifarious. They include merchant and passenger shipping, the development of the hydraulic power industry and irrigation, the need to maintain the water balance, pollution control in the Danube and environmental protection in riverside areas, and the issue of linking the Danube with the Rhine via a canal under construction in the F.R.G.... We would like to introduce the reader to these problems through reports by our special correspondents from the states located along the Danube. The series opens with a story by the Soviet publicist and writer Timur Gaidar.

Born of a confluence of mountain streams in Alpine Schwarzwald (Black Forest), the river runs for some 3,000 kilometres before splitting up into three branches and discharging into the Black Sea. In spring and summer its waters are dark brown, while in winter they are the colour of steel. Despite this obvious fact, it still remains for all of us the "Blue Danube" of Strauss's waltz. This is perhaps one of the most fascinating examples of a case where millions of people suddenly begin to see the world through the eyes of an artist, and nothing can be done to alter their perception.

The basin of the Danube, the largest river in Western, Central and South East Europe, encompasses the whole of Hungary, almost all of Romania and Austria, the greater part of Yugoslavia, about half of the F.R.G. and Czechoslovakia, and parts of Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, Italy and Poland.

The "basin" means that in that vast territory of 817,000 square kilometres, every streamlet and rivulet, even the tiniest, regardless of its initial course, and subsequent meanderings, will sooner or later snuggle up to the Danube and yield its waters to it.

Let us take, for example, the Isar River, one of the Danube's 300-odd tributaries. From source to estuary, it takes in 1,293 brooks and creeks. Every one of them has flowed past farmsteads, villages and towns. People have sung on their banks, others have laughed, another tired, has washed his face, and another has shed a tear....

It is clear that it is not only 6,430 cubic metres of water per second that the Danube carries into the Black Sea. It also carries human joy and grief, the colour of the sky, the fragrance of the fields, the freshness of Alpine snow and - this cannot be omitted either - the heavy breath of factories.

The Danube is wilful, obstinate and meandering. There is no river like it in the world! It struggles through eleven mountain ranges on its way to the Black Sea.

Is it perhaps just like this, through great difficulties, that mankind pushes its way forward to happiness, peace and a better future? History, after all, also flows at one moment unhurriedly, like the Danube across the Hungarian plain, and at another abruptly picks up speed, seething and bubbling, like the Danube in the Cazane Defile as it crashes through the Carpathian Mountains.

Many a time has the Blue Danube run purple! Many a conqueror has used the waterway that links Western, Central and South East Europe! Many an invader has set fire to cities and villages on its banks!

On February 19, 1945, the sky over Central Europe and the Danube was clear and frosty. On that morning guards at the nazi concentration camp of Mauthausen herded 400 prisoners out of doors. They were then ordered to take off their clothes. Several hours later, when they were numb with cold and could not longer move, the nazis took fire hoses and bean dousing them with freezing water until they turned to statues of ice.

Twelve European countries have raised monuments on the banks of the Danube to their nationals tortured to death at Mauthausen. A total of 123,000 people - Russian, French, Jewish, Belgian, Dutch, Czech, Slovak and Yugoslav - were killed by the nazis there.

The destinies of Europe and the Danube are inseparable.

Different judgements can be passed on the international congress convened in Berlin more than a hundred years ago under the chairmanship of Bismarck. What should be noted here is the treaty signed there by seven European powers, which said: "To increase the guarantees of free shipping on the Danube, which is recognized as being of common interest

F.R.G.

A spanner in the works

● BONN TAKES AN AMBIGUOUS STAND ON THE ISSUE OF SEVENTY-TWO PERSHING 1A MISSILES.

Addressing the Geneva disarmament conference, Eduard Shevardnadze asked an F.R.G. representative staight out whether his country had any nuclear facilities at the disposal of its army. Another question, put to the American delegate, was who actually had control of the nuclear warheads for the Pershing 1A missiles?

These were serious questions. How did Bonn react?

Representatives of the government and the ruling CDU/CSU coalition feigned outraged innocence. The Soviet Union knew only too well, a statement published by the government's public relations department said, that the F.R.G. was not a nuclear power and had no wish to become one. As for the Pershing 1A warheads, they were the exclusive property of the Americans.

Michaela Geiger, the CDU/CSU faction's foreign policy expert, was even more categorical about it: the F.R.G. had never sought, and would never seek nuclear power status, she said, adding that Konrad Adenauer had unilaterally renounced nuclear weapons in 1954.

Well, obviously you can only renounce what you have. The F.R.G. had of course no nuclear weapons in 1954. Having signed the Paris Accords, which afforded it access to NATO and to the Western European Union, the F.R.G. pledged itself not to produce nuclear weapons on its territory. In fact, however, it has been angling for them ever since. As early as in September 1956, Konrad Adenauer told his cabinet that a pledge not to produce atomic bombs did not automatically mean a pledge not to have them. In March 1958, the Bundestag adopted a decision to arm the Bundeswehr with the "latest" (meaning atomic) weapons. Adenauer even threatened the F.R.G.'s withdrawal from NATO if the Bundeswehr didn't get them. So what price the assertions that the F.R.G. has never wanted to be a nuclear power? The reason the F.R.G. failed to join the nuclear club then was not its leaders' unwillingness to do so. Even Bonn's closest allies realized how dangerous a nuclear stick would be in the hands of those who intended to remake the map of postwar Europe.

Some may object that all this is history. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then, and the F.R.G. has acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. But certain highly influential quarters on the Rhine are still anxious to circumvent the treaty and get hold of nuclear weapons in some way or other. This is evidenced by the talk about the "European nuclear potential," the revival of the "European defence community" idea, and so on.

But let's return to the Pershing 1A missiles. The government maintains that the Americans are in exclusive control of them. But how are we to interpret Chancellor Helmut Kohl's statement to the effect that these systems belong to "a third state"? A third state obviously means the F.R.G., not the United States. Could the Chancellor's choice of words be unfortunate, as often happens? Alfred Dregger, Chairman of the CDU/CSU faction in the Bundestag, perfers to describe the Pershing 1A missiles as "joint systems." Such joint ownership of nuclear weapons runs counter to the provisions of the non-proliferation treaty.

Helmut Kohl and Alfred Dregger do not speak for the entire government coalition, however. The Free Democrats are of the opinion that a Soviet-American "double global zero" agreement should not be frustrated because of the F.R.G. government's position. The SDPG warned that if this position was not changed, it would demand the calling of an extraordinary Bundestag session during the summer recess.

The statements by representatives of the government and the CDU/CSU furnished no satisfactory answers to the questions put in Geneva. On the contrary, they only served to add to the doubts as to the sincerity of Bonn's promise to abide by its commitments and strive for disarmament. The F.R.G. government can remove these doubts only if it stops throwing a spanner in the works of Soviet-American agreements.

ALEXANDER TOLPEGIN
our own correspondent
Bonn

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to all Europeans, the High Contracting Parties decree that all fortresses and fortifications on the river from the Iron Gate to its estuaries shall be demolished and that new ones shall not be built. Henceforth, no naval ship may sail on the Danube below the Iron Gate...."

Cutting through mountains and bringing peoples together, the river seemed to have prompted the right course to mankind.

The problems confronting states should not, of course, be oversimplified, just as history ought not to be embellished. After the Berlin congress of 1878, fortresses continued to stand and even to be built on the Danube, and warships continued to ply its waters.

Can one forget how in 1944 and 1945, armoured boats of the Soviet Danube flotilla fought their way upstream for over 2,000 kilometres, helping to liberate Belgrade and Budapest, Bratislava and Vienna from the nazis? As they surged forward, hitting mine fields, drawing fire from enemy artillery batteries on the hostile bank and staging assault landings, the Soviet sailors, just like their comrades-in-arms on land - troops of the Soviet Army and the armies of our allies, hoped and believed that nazism would be crushed and that this would be the last world war in human history.

...Some 60 kilometres down the river from Belgrade, there stands an ancient fortress, one of the largest medieval citadels in Europe. Its twenty-five white towers resemble battle elephants ready for a fight. Famed Smederevo vineyards stretch out from it along the Danube.

The fortress was built in the 16th century by the Serbian despot Brankovic. The vineyards were established in the 3rd century A.D. on the orders of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Probus. The fortress was destroyed by air raids during World War II. The vineyards flourish and yield prime crops.

On more than one occasion on quiet summer evenings I have chanced to sit at a camp-fire with fishermen on the river bank. Freighters would pass up and down and a small tug, its diesel engine rattling, diligently towed heavy barges. The wind carried smells and sounds from the middle of the river. One could tell what the skipper's caring wife had cooked for him for supper. Scraps of conversations in Russian, German and many other European languages were audible.

Occasionally, a cruise liner with flashing lights would go by. Watching it, I would invariably feel envy for its passengers.

Now the reader is invited to make an arm-chair journey along this river, which the ancient Greek poet Hesiod called "the brother of the Nile and the son of the Ocean."

Happy journey!

TIMUR GAIDAR

You will find the first report from the lower Danube in one of our coming issues.

OF MISSILE RANGES AND FARSIGHTEDNESS

VALENTIN FALIN

It would seem that following the Soviet Union's proposal to deal with the medium- and shorter-range missile problem on a global scale, negotiations with the U.S. on these weapon categories should have reached the home stretch (considering the efforts made earlier). If accepted, this proposal would obviate the need for the complicated control arrangements indispensable should part of the present MR and SR missile arsenal and, consequently, the relevant production, storage and maintenance of facilities be retained. Such would objectively be the case if the outcome of the talks rested on technical problems alone.

Let us now see what the negotiating parties are in fact divided upon - political matters or the logistics of blazing the trail to a settlement that has no comparable precedent? Have the parties succeeded in arriving at a joint concept of the agreement that is expected to become an example of the new approach to disarmament - or have they merely drawn closer together on some particulars? Is there enough tangible evidence of Washington having at last come to realize that the lowering of the level of military confrontation is a desirable alternative? Desirable, mind you, not forced, i.e., not something to be undertaken tongue-in-cheek or linked with all sorts of "undercurrent" clauses that make it possible to engage in litigation at will, or try and take cover behind 72 Pershing 1A missiles, as the Americans are now doing?

No clear-cut answer has so far been furnished to any of these three questions. Moreover, the declarations by the American administration, which pays lip service to the importance of curbing the arms race, do not quite tally with its real actions aimed at aggravating and intensifying armed confrontation. The discrepancy can be explained in different ways, and every explanation merits reflection.

In an interview for the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper last spring General Brent Scowcroft, who often acts as an adviser to the Reagan administration, pointed out that if medium- and shorter-range missiles were eliminated from Europe, there would emerge a growing, indeed irresistible, temptation to get rid of battlefield nuclear facilities. This, the general went on, would certainly lead to the withdrawal of all American troops and the neutralization of Europe.

Quite a symptomatic line of reasoning, isn't it? We are told, and quite bluntly at that, that the U.S. is neither ready to accept non-nuclear status itself, nor is it going to have its NATO allies moderate their nuclear ambitions. But this is not all there is to it. A non-nuclear Western Europe turns out to be unsuitable for Washington as a military partner - or rather as a "forward line" offering the U.S. the advantage in a major conflict. And if Europe ever goes "neutral," which God forbid, it will be regarded as an alien, almost as an object of hostilities. So the best thing to do is to prevent even its partial denuclearization.

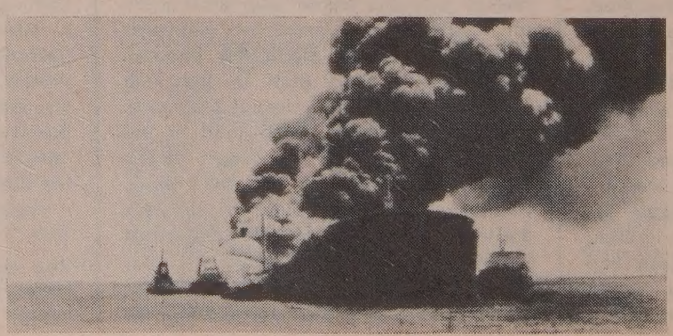
Somewhat later, General Bernard Rogers expressed approximately the same idea in a more straightforward manner when resigning his post as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO's United Forces in Europe. Obviously annoyed with the Washington "windbags," he stressed once again, to begin with, that the Pershing 2 missiles, now deployed in the F.R.G., were strategic first-strike systems, and that the loss of those specific weapons would be irreparable in principle. Secondly, the perceptible progress of Soviet-American negotiations made the general anxious about the fate of pet projects he had been trying hard to push through over the past few years. What would become of the FOFA and Army-2000 plans, and other initiatives meant to integrate Western Europe into the Pentagon's latest

PERSIAN GULF

Oil boomerang

● WASHINGTON'S ADVENTURIST POLICY IN THE PERSIAN GULF HAS BOOMERANGED ONTO THE ECONOMY OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD.

Everything went well at first, or so it seemed. Having undertaken to protect the oil interests of the "free world," Washington sent a large naval unit to the Persian Gulf, where 60 per cent of the world total of prospected oil resources are concentrated, and continued week after week to add new warships to it. The Western media reminded their publics of how important Persian Gulf oil was for their economies and implied that supplies had to be guaranteed at all costs lest a severe energy crisis should strike. Impressive statistics were cited. In the early eighties, for instance, 13 to 14 million barrels of oil (45-48 per cent of the world oil trade) were shipped to Western Europe, Japan and the U.S. through the Strait of Hormuz daily as against 6.5-7.5 million a day now, after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war. Such a reduction is a serious matter. And what if Iran were to use missiles to block the Strait of Hormuz, thus cutting off the oil supply to the "free world" altogether?



In short, an alarming picture was painted. At the same time, Americans and West Europeans were reassured that the West would not allow anything of the kind to happen: NATO countries and their

neo-globalist concepts? The general had indeed cause for worry, and was so upset that he is even said to have differed with the President himself, on tactics if not on strategy.

Be that as it may, the stand taken by U.S. generals overall - and not only by those on the right and extreme-right - is quite unequivocal. Since U.S. national security doctrine is based on the premise that the Americans must have an edge over the enemy in any armed conflict, and eventually gain the upper hand, the top brass are demanding the appropriate material back-up for this. A reduction in nuclear weapons can be negotiated only following a drastic revision of the current doctrine. Otherwise....

WASHINGTON DOES NOT WANT WESTERN EUROPE TO GO NON-NUCLEAR. SUCH A MILITARY PARTNER DOES NOT SUIT IT.

Otherwise what? The President expatiates in his public statements on the possibility of peaceful coexistence amid mountains of arms. He goes even further and claims that without arms civilization will perish. It simply can't do without arms, any more than a roast can do without pepper and other condiments. In the heat of the polemics the President refers to all agreements as fiction, unless big sticks are attached to them instead of seals. The head of the U.S. administration says that America will never give up its "power politics" under any circumstances, thus giving the public to understand that he claims to be an heir and successor to Theodore Roosevelt, the early-20th-century President of the United States, one of the bluntest exponents of imperialist views.

This mixture of conservatism and modernity may be fit for domestic consumption. But what about the international arena? Each argument "from a position of strength" evokes a counter-argument with the result that things only seem to be moving. And if they are moving at all, it is towards less security rather than the contrary.

But what if security has nothing to do with all this and it's no use looking for a rational kernel in Washington's position? After all, nothing would bring security nearer today than the elimination of nuclear weapons or a 95 per cent cutback in them, and the reduction of the destabilzing (disarming) potential of the two sides to nought in accordance with the calculations of the group headed by Academician Roald Sagdeyev and Professor Andrei Kokoshin. This prospect does not suit the U.S.; what it wants is not equal security for all, but security for a select few, and especially for itself.

What we have here is a striking contradiction: for decades American Presidents have been unable to gear the might of their great power to a constructive objective. Ronald Reagan's second term of office expires soon. What political legacy will he leave the White House? He has doubled his country's foreign debt and made several generations of unborn Americans the poorer. That he has surpassed all his predecessors together in accumulating debt can hardly stand to his credit. Moreover, he has not signed a single arms control agreement but has ruined or invalidated the results of the efforts of several previous administrations. He has found himself at the centre, or the epicentre, of countless scandals which have by no means added lustre to the American way of life or to American policy. The Iran-contras affair overshadows any swindle perpetrated in the U.S.A. over the past 20 years by any standards. Richard Nixon's Watergate looks almost like child's play by comparison.

Now he is facing a dilemma. It is only the extreme right that can help him save face: they cannot possibly leave in the lurch a man who, in his counterrevolutionary fervour, has gone to the length of breaching his own country's laws. But what about his dream of securing pride of place in the galaxy of the peacemaking presidents? If the U.S.-U.S.S.R. talks in Geneva are to get anywhere, he will have to come down to earth and win the support of the political mainstream. The right will be of no help to him in this respect.

What will the President stop at, and how far will he be allowed to go? We'll know the answers soon. Now that the finale and a change of scene are only slightly over a year off, fate is giving Ronald Reagan a last chance to do something worthwhile to be remembered by. Will he use this chance and play his finest political role? In a sense, it can be reduced to Hamlet's famous question: to be or not to be? In any case, it is up to Reagan himself to put the finishing touches to his public image. ■

PANORAMA

allies had rushed more than forty warships to the Gulf area to ensure freedom of navigation and an uninterrupted supply of oil.

What happened next came as a surprise. After the U.S. Navy had started its operations in the Persian Gulf on July 23, oil prices jumped sharply, from 18 to 20 dollars a barrel. On August 3, a barrel already cost 22.16 dollars. The French Le Quotidien de Paris quotes experts as predicting a rise in the price of oil to 30 dollars, and some American forecasters see it reaching 50-60 dollars a barrel. The prices of gold and other precious metals showed an upward trend at the same time, which always happens when the business world panics.

There is indeed ample cause for panic. When Iran was conducting its naval exercises in the Persian Gulf, an average of 3-4 ships a day instead of the usual 40 ventured through the Strait of Hormuz. The oil flow fell off at once by 90 per cent. Some tankers are reported to have cast anchor for fear of being attacked in the Strait of Hormuz; others are doing so on instructions from their charterers, who expect oil prices to climb further.

According to the newspaper The Chicago Tribune, experts believe that the U.S. actions in the Persian Gulf can only serve further to jeopardize the world oil trade rather than protect it. The developments now in progress there, the newspaper warns, may result in the termination of oil deliveries through the Persian Gulf, which will land the U.S., Western Europe and Japan in an energy crisis as severe as that of the early seventies. The Chicago Tribune optimistically believes such a turn of events to be hardly likely, but reproaches Washington, albeit indirectly, saying that before the U.S. intervention oil was coming in almost uninterruptedly from the Gulf in spite of the war, now in its seventh year. John Lichtblau, President of the American Petroleum Industry Research foundation, is even more to the point: "There has never been an interruption in the flow of oil from the Gulf in the seven years the tanker war has been under way, and there was little concern in the industry that oil would be shut off. The oil has been going through unimpeded and there have been no shortages." John Lichtblau noted a paradoxical situation: "It is thus ironic that a plan the government (U.S. - **Y. K.**) said was to secure oil may place it in more jeopardy."

In Washington, attempts are being made to cool off the high-running passions: top-ranking energy experts say that, on the one hand, a sustained reduction in oil supplies to the United States is most unlikely and, on the other, that there is a growing awareness of such a reduction being possible. At the same time, loud assurances are being made to the effect that the administration will cope with

any oil shortages if the President imposes a state of emergency, no less.

It is about time Washington saw reason and invited urgent collective measures to stop the Iran-Iraq war and normalize the situation in the Persian Gulf on the basis of the well-known resolution of the UN Security Council on this problem. Instead, Washington is considering establishing a special U.S. Naval Command in the Persian Gulf, and the Pentagon boasts that it can send enough ships to cause the water level there to rise considerably.

It would do well to recall the oil boomerang now hitting back at those who have sent ships to the Persian Gulf. After all, an armed venture can boomerang as well.

YEVGENY KORSHUNOV

ITALY

Not plain sailing

● A NEW FIVE-PARTY "SHIP OF STATE" (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SOCIALISTS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS AND LIBERALS) HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN ROME.

This is the 47th cabinet since the war. It is expected to stay afloat till next spring, at the latest. The going will be too hard for it to last longer.

It would seem that the government, and Christian Democrat Giovanni Goria, at 44 the country's youngest ever Premier, have not received a bad legacy. The inflation rate has come down from 21.2 to 4.5 per cent. Italy's economic growth rate is about Europe's highest (about three per cent a year). Industry is being modernized fast, and the latest branches - the production of computers, robots (of which Italy is the world's fourth biggest manufacturer), automated systems, laser units (Italy comes second in the world in the level of their industrial utilization), are making good progress. The same applies to information science and biotechnology. The achievements of the Italian aircraft, automobile, chemical and pharmaceutical industries are fairly impressive. Italy, which, to quote Newsweek, "was verging on economic obsolescence, a gilded tourist Mecca rusting at the edges" until recently, is now increasingly often likened to Japan. "A golden year," the American weekly sighs enviously.

This rapid recovery is due not only to Italian capitalism's phenomenal ability to readjust quickly and muster its reserves; but also to the favourable market situation of the past few years. Oil prices have dropped sharply (Italy imports three quarters of the mineral fuel it uses); the dollar has gone down; mini-production is booming; the era of information science and microelectronics has offered small businesses new opportunities.

The money required for structural readjustments was obtained by harsh austerity measures, slashing welfare programmes and privatizing state-run enterprises. This line has been made possible by entrepreneurs encroaching on the trade unions' gains in production. Unfortunately, the trade unions have failed to assess, in good time, the depth, scale and social consequences of technological restructuring. Now there are two persons, with their specific mentality, employed in the service sphere for every one employed in industry. Mini-factories have, as a rule, no trade unions. A reduction of payouts on the index-linked wage scale that compensates for the rising cost of living came as a strong blow.

Big business is pleased with the fact that the new Premier intends to carry on the policies of his predecessor. Will this line work in a financial and economic situation that is changing before our very eyes? The period of "cheap energy, a not-too-dear dollar, and a stable government" is on the wane. Events in the Persian Gulf have caused oil prices to soar. The fall of the dollar has aggravated the crisis of the international currency and financial system, and brought things to the verge of a total trade war. Even the most conservative Wall Street bankers and economists are warning, at the tops of their voices of an imminent global economic slump. There is no stability in the government coalition either. Jubilant as the Christian Democrats and Socialists are at their successes and the Communist Party's setback at the June parliamentary elections, they have failed to win over a considerable proportion of the communist electorate. The redistribution of votes occurred chiefly within the ruling majority. Smaller parties have again been used as plankton by the Christian Democrats and Socialists. Will the armistice between them last? Having lost the helm and failed to secure a number of important cabinet posts, the Italian Socialist Party is prepared to raise a mutiny on board at any moment and sink the ship. There are several pretexts for demanding a cabinet reshuffle. Two referendums are to be held before this year is out - one on nuclear energy and the other on a reform of the judicial system. This is a fine pretext for resuming the war of words between the Italian Socialist and Christian Democratic parties which polemize over virtually every point of the cabinet's activity.

Reaganomics Italian-style has not blunted the edge of the class struggle. Social conflicts seem to be entering a new phase in Italy. The trade union movement is regaining the fighting spirit of the past two decades. It is looking increasingly vigorously for ways of overcoming division, healing the rifts that plague it and restoring unity. The employers' "golden year" will not last forever.

LEV MAKAREVICH

FROM OUR MAILBAG

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I feel very strongly about what the CIA and U.S. military are doing in the Persian Gulf. As far back as 1979 they tried to fan the Iran-Iraq conflict - another hotbed of tension in the world. They have been presented with a fresh opportunity to pose a threat to national liberation forces, to the Soviet Union and other socialist states. The protracted conflict does not threaten peace in this region alone. The U.N. should leave no stone unturned in the search for ways to a speedy settlement.

DONATA ARCORI
Rome, Italy

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I have just come back from a trip to the U.S.S.R. which I visited with a group of my countrymen. I was impressed with your achievements. New construction projects, new-found enthusiasm in the cities and in the countryside - all pulsing with new developments. The France-U.S.S.R. Association sets great store by an atmosphere of friendship and trust between our peoples. We need more contacts, more meetings to clear away our many misunderstandings.

GEORGES DUCHESNE
Paris, France

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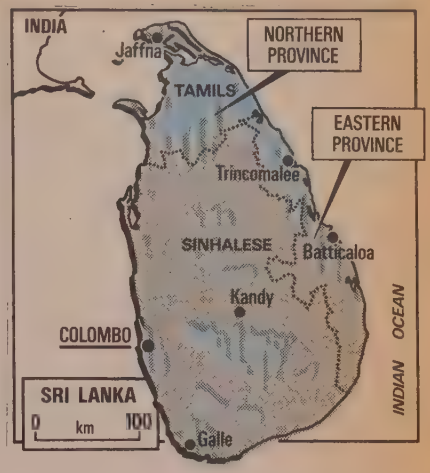
I was lucky enough to be born in a village where all decisions are taken collectively by the community. My ambition is to make a practical and theoretical study of an advanced socialist community and be educated in the U.S.S.R. If that dream comes true my knowledge will help my country build a new life.

EMMANUEL DARE AKERELOLU
Kafanahan, Nigeria

THE LONG-AWAITED SETTLEMENT



At long last the bloodshed in Sri Lanka has ended. There now exists a real prospect of a peaceful settlement of the ethnic Tamil-Sinhalese conflict that has shaken the country for over four years. This prospect stems from the agreement signed on July 29 in Colombo by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the President of Sri Lanka Junius Jayawardene.

Rajiv Gandhi's government was prompted to offer its services to Colombo as a mediator by more than just the sentiments of the 50 million Tamils living in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The intercommunal strife in Sri Lanka had destablized the whole situation in a country that is India's close neighbour. Outside forces immediately took advantage of this to strengthen their presence there. Military instructors from Pakistan arrived in Sri Lanka, as did agents of the Israeli secret service Mossad, and British experts on combating guerrilla movements. Acting through its partners, Washington sought to use the intercommunal conflict to establish its own position on the island. It also acted directly - by obtaining the right for its ships to enter the port of Trincomalee for refuelling, and building a big radio-electronic intelligence base under the cover of the Voice of America radio station.

India, in its role of mediator, sought a reconciliation between the Tamils and Sinhalese through a political formula that would take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil minority for autonomy, while at the same time ensuring the political unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Lanka.

The agreement signed in Colombo not only crowned the efforts of Indian diplomacy with success, but directly resulted from the statesmanship displayed by President Jayawardene.

The key point of the agreement is that the Northern and Eastern provinces are to be united into a single administration unit, which will have wide powers of internal autonomy. Elections to a provincial council will be held as early as this year. At the same time, the agreement envisages a referendum to be held next year in the Eastern Province (inahbited apart from Tamils professing Hinduism, by Sinhalese and Muslims, whether of Tamil or Arab origin) about the desirability of a merger with the Northern Province. The state of emergency in the north and east of the country will shortly be lifted. The Tamil language will be recognized as an official language along with Sinhalese and English.

In keeping with the agreement, hostilities have been stopped between Tamil militants and government troops. A contingent of Indian troops has arrived on the island at the request of the Sri Lanka government and will act as a peace-keeping force to supervise the disengagement of the two warring sides and the surrender of arms by the Tamils.

FROM THE NEW TIMES FILE

Seventy-five per cent of 16 million people inhabiting Sri Lanka, or the overwhelming majority of the population, are Sinhalese (more than 12 million). Most of them are Bhuddists. The second largest ethnic group in the country are Tamils - about 3 million or 18 per cent of the population. They, for the most part, profess Hinduism, but there are also Muslims among them. Another major ethnic minority are the Lankan Moors who are of Arab descent. They are mostly Muslims and there are about a million of them. Sri Lanka also has small communities of Burghers (descendants of mixed Sinhalese-Dutch marriages) and Veddas (aboriginal islanders).

The Tamil population of Sri Lanka can be divided into two groups. One (about 2.5 million-strong) is made up of Lankan or Ceylon Tamils, whose ancestors settled on the island before the time of Christ. The other is made up of Indian Tamils, descendants of people from South India brought to the island by the British at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries to work on the tea and rubber plantations (they now number about 500,000).

The Sri Lankan Tamils live in the Northern Province, where they are in effect the sole ethnic group, and in the Eastern Province, where they make up 42 per cent of the population. The Indian Tamils live mostly in the central and southern parts of the country. For the most part they are stateless. Many of them are awaiting Indian citizenship and repatriation to India. A small number have acquired Sri Lankan citizenship. They had hardly any involvement in the ethnic crisis that beset the island in the mid-eighties.

The British colonialists who took over the island in the 19th century pursued their traditional policy of divide and rule. They made wide use of the Tamil population in the colonial administration and did not discourage the growth of a Tamil bourgeoisie.

After Ceylon won independence, the Sinhalese bourgeoisie came to power. It sought to oust its Tamil rivals and strengthen its own position. The intercommunal conflict often erupted into open clashes. The most serious and harmful for the country was the intercommunal strife that broke out in July 1983, resulting in what was in effect civil war.

Government troops, made up almost entirely of Sinhalese, were confronted by various Tamil military and political organizations.

Tamil political parties had existed on the island before independence. In 1972 almost all of them united into the single bloc later known as the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). At the last parliamentary elections in 1977, they won 16 seats and became the biggest opposition party in this respect. In the early seventies several new Tamil organizations were founded. The biggest were: the Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Popular Organization for the Liberation of Tamil Eelam, the Student Eelam Revolution Organization, the People's Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of Eelam, and the Organization for the Liberation of Tamil Eelam. All of them called for the establishment of a separate Tamil state - Tamil Eelam (the Land of the Tamils), to be made up of the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. Up to 1983 their operations had been limited, but after the July bloodshed they drastically stepped up their rebel military operations.

Over the past four years more than 6,000 people fell victim to the hostilities between the government army and Tamil militants. Great damage was also done to the country's economy. The growing military expenditure imposed a heavy burden on the national budget.

Government army units have been returned to their permanent places of deployment. The Tamil units are handing in their arms. A presidential decree has granted an amnesty to both Tamil insurgents and Tamil political prisoners. Their release has already begun. Under the agreement, Sri Lankan refugees who fled to the Indian state of Tamil Nadu are to be repatriated, and Indian citizens living on the island will return to India.

At their joint press conference in Colombo, the leaders of the two countries expressed the hope that the agreement would mark the beginning of a new era on the island, making division and mistrust between the Tamil and Sinhalese people a thing of the past. Asked by a foreign correspondent why the Sri Lanka government hadn't offered such conditions four years ago to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, President Jayawardene replied that at that time he lacked the common sense, the courage and the foresight. The two sides have also agreed to reconsider in the near future the continued presence in Sri Lanka of foreign military and intelligence personnel. The Sri Lanka government has undertaken not to allow Trincomalee and other ports to be used by the naval forces of foreign countries. The operation of oil-refuelling capacities in Trincomalee is to be turned over to a joint India-Sri Lanka company to be set up shortly. And, moreover, the government of Sri Lanka is to revise its agreements with foreign broadcasting organizations to ensure that their transmitters are not be used for military or intelligence purposes.

As Rajiv Gandhi stressed in his reply to a question put by the New Times correspondent at a news conference on his return from Colombo, the external forces that sought to use the Tamil problem for their own purposes have now lost the opportunity of doing so. Their presence on Sri Lanka was more than a regional problem. If these forces had maintained their presence, the Indian leader pointed out, they would have represented a threat both to stability in the Indian Ocean and to the non-aligned movement.

Was it those forces who, in the final count, stood behind the attempt on the life of the Indian Prime Minister in Colombo? One thing, however, is clear: they will try in one way or another to foil the implementation of the India-Sri Lanka agreement. Playing into their hands are certain Sinhalese chauvinistic circles and Tamil nationalists who, though for entirely different reasons, do not wish to accept the agreement reached by the leaders of the two neighbouring countries, an agreement which sets an example of a realistic approach to defusing a conflict situation on the basis of sensible compromise.

LEONID ZHEGALOV
our own correspondent

Delhi

EL SALVADOR

Between the upper and nether millstone

ALEXANDER BARYSHEV

Washington propaganda is seeking to create the impression that a certain amount of liberlization is taking place in El Salvador, where for more than 7 years government troops have been unsuccessfully waging war against the people. Nothing is further from the truth.

The terror continues

If the Salvadorian death figures are plotted on a graph the resulting curve has a wave-like appearance. At times the activity of the repressive machine slows down somewhat, and Washington enthusiastically publicizes the progress of democratization in El Salvador. These periods usually more or less coincide with requests from the White House to Congress for allocations for military and economic aid to its Salvadorian protegées. American aid to the Duarte government is constantly increasing. This year it has already reached the sum of 417 million dollars (taking into account the aid received by El Salvador from the U.S. allies, this sum further increases to 840 million dollars, of which 450 million will be spent on military operations). As soon as the money is received, the number of victims again begins to rise.

The formal abolition, for publicity's sake, in 1984 - at the beginning of Duarte's presidency - of certain sections of the security service openly linked with the death squads changed nothing. In fact the repressive machine was even expanded, and the number of victims topped the 61 thousand mark, a monstrous figure for tiny El Salvador. In terms of the population of the United States, which paid with 40,000 lives for its dirty war in Vietnam, this is the equivalent of almost three million.

Here is a report sent by the correspondent of the French paper L'Humanité from El Salvador last October: "In the Human Rights Commission* and the Committee of Mothers of El Salvador's Political Prisoners and Missing one can again see on the walls, as two years ago, the same horrifying photographs: secret mass graves littered with corpses, bodies without heads, without arms and legs, and the terrible pictures of mothers searching for their children in ravines that have been turned into waste dumps. These photographs were not taken two years ago. They were taken only a couple of weeks, at most a month ago."

In April in the Palace of Nations in Geneva the 29th session of the Human Rights Committee, after discussing the report of the Salvadorian representative, reached the conclusion that, as in the past, the government of José Napoleon Duarte and the death squads are constantly and on a mass scale grossly violating basic human rights, and especially the right to life. The Committee noted that arbitrary arrests, tortures and inhuman treatment of arrested patriots and fighters for human rights continued in El Salvador.

On the battlefield

Duarte is using terror to try to find a way out of his difficult situation, and in particular out of his difficult military predicament. Units of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (NLF), which has become a strong and well-organized force, carried out a number of successful operations during the spring offensive.

The guerrilla attack on army units in El Paraiso on March 31 made the greatest impression. They captured the most modern fort, just 48 km from the capital San Salvador, built in line with Pentagon blueprints in 1981. American experts believed an unexpected attack on the fort was impossible, as it was built at several levels and encircled by a special defence system. Nevertheless, on December 30, 1983, the guerrillas stormed the fort and held it for 14 hours.

And now another attack on El Paraiso. A unit of about 200 guerrillas, under cover of rocket and mine fire, made their way to the base and destroyed its headquarters and intelligence centre. With minimal losses to themselves, the NLF units killed 64 of the government's punitive troops.

The American strategy of "pacification" of El Salvador, for which the American taxpayers pay up to 2 million dollars a day, is on the edge of breakdown producing any results. In the past few months the guerrillas have effectively been imposing the strategy of a long-drawn out people's war and are already operating in all 14 departments of the country.

*This commission is independent of the government. The authorities have also set up their own commission to improve their image on the world arena. It spreads false versions of events, alleging that the guerrillas are responsible for most of the attacks and kidnappings.

More violence...

Photo from U.S. News and World Report

Political crisis

Against the background of the regime's military defeats, the political crisis is increasingly apparent. The isolation of the Christian Democrat government, and especially its leader, President José Napoleon Duarte, is growing. Relations between his party - the Christian Democrats (CDP) and extreme right-wing circles, never very good, have been sharply aggravated. The extreme right are represented on the political scene by two organizations: the Nationalist Republican Alliance (NRA) set up in 1981 by the leader of the Salvadoran fascists, D'Aubuisson (its members dream of a strong personality at the helm of the state), and the traditional right-wing National Conciliation Party (NCP).

In January, 27 members of the Legislative Assembly (almost half the total and most of them from the NRA ande NCP) began boycotting its meetings. Ostensibly, the boycott was over a procedural matter concerning changes in the electoral law. But behind this procedural confrontation, there is undoubtedly something much bigger. The extreme right are attacking the Duarte government for its inability to bring order to the country and suppress the guerrillas. Lately the position of the right has begun to be supported by quite a substantial section of the middle and petty bourgeoisie, which is suffering considerable losses from the war, to which there is no end in sight. Prices are rising, inflation is rampant, and a war tax has been introduced. Many businessmen are going bankrupt and production is being curtailed. Almost half the enterprises have been closed down. And as a result unemployment has soared (almost half the able-bodied population). Since 1982 the standard of living has dropped by 30 per cent. The boycott of extreme right-wing members of parliament has been supported by the Industrialists Association and certain other organizations of businessmen. In response to their appeal, on January 23 employers and businessmen shut down their factories and commercial enterprises and held a national 24-hour strike. And in the CDP itself differences are growing. The party has effectively been split into three factions.

The army's stand

The army is acquiring increasing political influence. In effect the military have become something of an armed party that lays claim to being the saviour of the country and the values of Western and Christian civilization. Washington is keeping a close eye on the in-fighting between the various groups of Salvadoran officers, giving its support first to one then to another. American advisers in San Salvador are following the principle of "Divide and Rule," but with the overall aim of strengthening the reactionary elements in the army.

On the whole, Duarte's policy, especially his policy of repression, suits Salvadoran Centurions. But they are apprehensive about his attempts - albeit purely demagogic - to create the illusion that he is prepared for a dialogue with the rebels. They have no cause for worry, since two rounds of talks between Duarte's representatives and the guerrillas have already taken place. The third round was blocked by the government (it was to be held in September 1986). The guerrillas' proposals reflected their sincere desire to put an end to the war and return to peaceful pursuits. They showed a realistic approach to the situation and insisted on the formation of a widely representative transitional coalition government.

Could Washington allow that? Of course not. In itself a peaceful dialogue, not to mention approval of the patriots' proposals, would have meant recognizing them as a political force entitled to representation in bodies of power. That was why the dialogue was broken off.

Duarte himself, according to The Christian Science Monitor, is confident of support not only from the United States, but also from powerful armed forces. While not denying this, The New York Times believes that this support has reached its lowest level in the three years of Duarte's presidency.

Washington and Duarte

A few months ago a Salvadoran paper carried a paid advertisement inserted by the so-called National Action Movement calling for the overthrow of the Duarte regime. The President replied that he was ready to resign, and immediately went to see the American ambassador to complain about the oligarchy and certain generals. Either this was a mere threatrical gesture, or the ambassador managed to calm Duarte, but the President took back his resignation.

Now Duarte is under fire from two sides. On one side the extreme right are putting pressure on him, and on the other, his regime is cracking under the blows of the left. The ground he stands on is becoming increasingly shaky. That is why Washington is beginning to have doubts about his suitability.

There is danger of a military coup. As the leader of El Salvador's Communists Shafic Jorge Handal, noted, Washington is deliberately doing nothing to prevent the danger of new military coups. It is keeping track of all the putschist groups so as always to have the opportunity of choosing the most suitable person for any political situation.

Diplomatic circles in San Salvador say that despite all the rumours of a coup and the demands for the resignation of the President, Duarte so far still has United States support, which could allow him to remain in office until the next elections are due in 1989. But D'Aubuisson has not disappeared from the political scene. He is honorary life chairman of the NRA, and many people in El Salvador believe - not without reason - that he will stand again for the presidency. Or fall back on the help of the military - as he has done twice already - to try to stage another coup.

All this is going on behind the backs of the people. Public opinion polls held by church organizations show that most Salvadorans wish to support none of the rivalling and right-of-centre parties.

■

Difficult compromise

In Geneva the Seventh Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has ended.

Futile dialogue. Deep divisions between the West and the Third World. North-South talks deadlocked. Such were the headlines under which reports appeared in the Western press on the Seventh Session of UNCTAD, which ran in Geneva from the 9th July to the 3rd August. Some commentators had earlier predicted not only the failure of the session but even the break-up of this international organization, founded in 1964 as the UN General Assembly's principal agency for major questions of international trade and development.

Was this the traditional pessimism of journalists, accustomed as they have been for many years to seeing solutions to burning economic problems come up against obstacles created by the West? It was not so much pessimism as knowledge of the instructions issued to certain Western delegates prior to their arrival in Geneva, the substance of which can be read between the lines of the communiqué of the June conference of the "Big Seven" in Venice. The leaders of the foremost capitalist countries declared that the Conference would "provide an opportunity to discuss with developing countries the major problems and policy issues in the global economy with a view to promoting common perceptions and effective policies." The formula the Seven came up with may be meant to diplomatic flair, but it is clear that UNCTAD is being deliberately tailored from having been one of the world's most representative trade and economic forums (with 168 member states), a UN agency capable of seeking and finding solutions and the practical means of implementing them, to make it little more than a "debating society."

It is characteristic that Washington has lowered the level of its representation at the session. The U.S. delegation was led by a person of no great standing than the deputy assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, while the leaders of the majority of delegations were ministers. It is plain that the U.S. also attaches little significance to the conference's agenda. The questions tabled on it were pronounced by U.S. delegates to be lacking seriousness.

What sort of questions were they? The main task facing UNCTAD-VII was to "revitalize development, economic growth and international trade" as a means to resolving the four priority problems - external debt, trade in raw materials, improved terms for international commercial exchange and aid to the least developed countries. Despite the difficulty and the differing points of view of the participants at the Conference, they did succeed in reaching agreement and adopting a programme document (the UNCTAD-VII Final Act) in which instructions were given for the resolution of specified problems. The document noted, in part: in conditions of growing economic interdependence, the revitalization of the processes of development and international trade is our most urgent task. And it must be resolved through the multilateral efforts of all members of the world community. In this difficult compromise can be seen the success of the Conference's Seventh Session, bearing in mind Washington's attempts to frustrate understanding and remembering that UNCTAD-VI (Belgrade, 1983) effectively ended in failure, thus holding up the solution of urgent international economic problems.

Summing up the Conference, the world press gave its attention to one particular feature of it. It was the first large-scale forum at which the U.S.S.R. had spoken from the position of the new thinking in international economic affairs.

What is the essence of our position? Your correspondent put this question to the message to the Conference from to UNCTAD-VII, Vladimir Cheklin.

"The U.S.S.R.'s approach to the problems being considered at UNCTAD-VII," he said, "was set out in the message to the Conference from Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov. It said in part: Issues must not be dragged out in endless discussions that lead away from the adoption of constructive and realistic decisions. The new political thinking to which we call the world, based as it is in part on the growing interdependence of states and the priority of universal human values, should ensure a broad and long-term view of international economic contacts.

"To this end the Soviet Union gave its support to the constructive and non-confrontational pursuit of joint solutions to fundamental international economic problems. In the speech made by the head of the Soviet delegation to UNCTAD-VII, U.S.S.R. Foreign Trade Minister Boris Aristov, at the plenary session as well as in the addresses of Soviet spokesmen to workers' agencies at the Conference, a range of concrete proposals was put forward on ways of resolving the increasingly acute economic problems of the modern world.

"In the course of UNCTAD-VII the Soviet Union gave concrete expression to its new approach to international economic affairs by signing a multilateral agreement on the establishment of a Common Fund for Commodities. It is expected that the implementation of this agreement will facilitate the creation of a more stable and predictable situation on the raw materials market, as this is one of the basic factors in guaranteeing the economic security of states.

"At the Conference the U.S.S.R. and other CMEA member states supported the elaboration of principles whereby resources released as a result of disarmament could be used for development. The importance of this was stressed in the Final Document of UNCTAD-VII."

"The results of the seventh session," continued Vladimir Cheklin, "permit us to propose that UNCTAD play an important role in international economic relations. The majority of countries have manifested their desire for a constructive dialogue on global international economic problems in all their interconnectedness, interdependence and the elaboration of measures to resolve them while taking account of the interests of all states. The results of the UNCTAD session have given an additional impulse to the search for ways of further extending the participation of the U.S.S.R. in world economic contacts, which constitutes one of the most important goals in carrying out the economic reforms in the country.

The world press has also pointed out that the U.S.S.R.'s approach to international economic questions, which include the concrete problems of trade and development under discussion at Geneva, was not only favourably received by the majority of participants at UNCTAD-VII, but also influenced its outcome.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that the present situation in the world economy faces our domestic economic policy and our sectoral ministries and industrial enterprises with the need for acceleration and restructuring. The U.S.S.R.'s increased activity in world trade and develolpment aid demands a broader export base, better-quality and more competitive goods and the elaboration of a mechanism for establishing business links with foreign countries and firms.

The results of the UNCTAD session also prompt us to take a fresh look at a range of issues of international economic relations, and reach a deeper understanding of the fact that our position on these issues should not stem from considerations of expediency, but from the long-term goals of our participation in the international division of labour.

FELIX GORYUNOV

WHAT CAUSES TENSION AND INSTABILITY

ANATOLY ALEXEYEV

The first thing that strikes one about the Mediterranean is the extraordinary diversity there. The junction between Europe, Asia and Africa, the seat of ancient civilizations, the Mediterranean still largely remains a microcosm of the modern world.

The political map of the Mediterranean, comprising about a score of countries, presents a large spectrum of contrasting hues and colours. It contains socialist countries and capitalist powers, the leading members of the North Atlantic bloc, and countries active in the non-aligned movement - both highly industrialized states and developing ones that have shed the fetters of dependence fairly recently and are still at the crossroads.

Aircraft carriers and a formula of tension

The most salient feature of the political situation in the Mediterranean is the multitude of conflict situations that have been waiting to be remedied for years and even decades. Such hot spots as the Middle East, above all, Cyprus, Gibraltar and a host of others scattered all over the Mediterranean jeopardize global as well as regional security.

Second, the situation there is characterized by a high level of military preparations. Substantial armed forces of the NATO countries are permanently stationed there. The armed forces of Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey are supplemented by mighty U.S. air and naval units. Under bilateral agreements on bases with Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey, the U.S. keeps a certain number of troops in the region, too. According to the Committee on Defence Questions and Armaments of the Western European Union, the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean ordinarily includes up to six atomic submarines, one or two (sometimes three) aircraft carriers, twelve other large surface warships, 11 support ships and five amphibious landing craft with at least a battalion of Marines aboard. Observers have deduced what can be described as a formula of tension in the Mediterranean: one American aircraft carrier - normal; two - above normal; three - dangerous.

In the light of the above, what price the cliché that the U.S. and NATO's mailed fist in the Mediterranean serves to restrain Soviet expansionism, or the more "sophisticated" assertion that the tension there results from rivalry between the two "superpowers"? It would be in place here to quote a report of the Western European Union Assembly Committee to the effect that the "Soviet presence in the Mediterranean is modest." Incidentally, one doesn't have to be a strategist to see that the Soviet Union has every right to take security precautions in a region situated so close to its borders.

It would be only logical to presume that the extremely tense situation in the Mediterranean should compel all those concerned to try and reduce military confrontation there, settle conflicts and disputes, and promote stability. Nevertheless, the positive processes now underway in international relations have left that part of the world virtually untouched.

What do those livinig on the shores of the Mediterranean think about the region's problems? A look through the communiqué of the Second Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Mediterranean members of the Non-Aligned Movement, held on Brioni Island, Yugoslavia, on June 3-4, will give an idea of that.

In the period since the Valletta meeting, the ministers pointed out, the non-aligned countries of the Mediterranean "have faced numerous difficulties due to the continued policy of aggression, occupation and annexation, failure to resolve crises, bloc rivalry, attempts to expand spheres of influence, intervention and interference, the violation of internationally recognized frontiers, as well as a result of adverse developments in international economic relations." They made a special note of the fact "that the continuing increase in the military arsenals and fleets of the major powers, of their nuclear capabilities, military bases and strongholds, as well as the repeated demonstrations, threats and direct or indirect use of force, constitute one of the main causes of growing instability in the Mediterranean."

This view echoes, of course, the tendency to rank the "superpowers" in one class. However, the concrete facts cited by the Brioni conference participants speak for themselves. They are: the Israeli attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunisia and the U.S. aggression on Libya, the aggressive, expansionist policy of Israel and of those who back it in the Middle East, the substantial buildup of occupation troops in Cyprus and the influx of foreign settlers to the occupied part of the island, the dangerous situation in Lebanon, and so on.

So what does the political barometer in the Mediterranean point to?

Whose vital interests?

Breaking the deadlocks in the Middle East, Cyprus and other parts of the Mediterranean is a task of critical importance, but in none of them have any real steps been taken towards

a reliable settlement acceptable to all parties concerned. It is true, however, that the idea of holding an international conference on the Middle East issue now stands more chance of being accepted.

On the whole, the countries of the region have failed so far to rise above their differences to an awareness of the vital need radically to reduce military and political tension.

Progress towards stability and cooperation is being resisted - and quite deliberately so - by the most powerful forces. Suffice it to recall how uncompromisingly the United States has been opposing, at all the stages of the all-European process, any profound discussion of the problems of security in the Mediterranean. And this despite the fact that the Helsinki Final Act has proved beyond doubt the unbreakable link between security in the Mediterranean and European security. At the Stockholm Conference the U.S. objected with special obstinacy to the inclusion of naval activity in confidence-building measures, thus making it clear it did not want to restrict its access to the Middle East via the Mediterranean in any way.

I should remark in passing that in the West it is commonplace to refer to the Mediterranean as a strategically important region, an artery supplying Western Europe and the U.S. with Middle Eastern oil, etc. The truly vital interests of the Mediterranean countries themselves are effectively ignored. Such a stand on the part of the United States suggests that the current tense and unstable situation in the Mediterranean on the whole suits the U.S. administration and that this has been true especially since the U.S. gained a foothold there during World War II through its permanent military presence.

At the same time, the Mediterranean component of the European economic community has increased considerably over the past few years. Greece and Spain have been admitted to it. Turkey has applied for admission to the EEC. Malta's new government is to follow suit. Southern Mediterranean countries have also been drawn into the sphere of economic gravity of this Western European grouping, which is steadily growing to be the capitalist world's centre of force in its own right.

From Valletta to Brioni

At their first meeting in Valletta, the Foreign Ministers adopted the concept of making the Mediterranean a region of peace, security and cooperation. The above-mentioned Brioni conference largely concretized this concept. Its participants adopted a Statement on the Interrelation Between Security and Disarmament in Europe and the Mediterranean, and another on the relationship between security and cooperation in the Mediterranean and those in Europe. The Ministers put forward the following demands:

- the forthcoming agreement on the elimination of nuclear missiles from Europe should also include provisions for the elimination of such weapons from the Mediterranean;
- the agreements on the reduction of conventional armaments in Europe should be extended to the Mediterranean;
- other countries in the regions are not to allow the use of military bases or other military facilities on their territory against the non-aligned countries of the Mediterranean;
- all confidence-building measures agreed upon in Europe should also be applied to all military activities, naval, air and other operations in the Mediterranean;
- the non-aligned countries of the Mediterranean express their readiness to contribute through concretee actions to efforts aimed at reducing military activity, including, as a possible means to that end, not allowing nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed warships to enter their ports or internal waters.

The importance of these documents and of the outcome of the Brioni conference in general is not confined to these specific issues. What matters above all is that a large group of Mediterranean countries is coming up with ideas pertaining to problems of security and reducing the level of military activity in the region, outlining coordinated action, and seeking an extensive political dialogue.

Our country has declared its support for the extension to the Mediterranean of the confidence-building measures agreed upon for Europe for the reduction of armed forces, and the withdrawal of nuclear-armed ships from the Mediterranean. On the whole, we favour the withdrawal of the Soviet and U.S. fleets from the Mediterranean, and the non-deployment of nuclear weapons on the territories of the non-nuclear Mediterranean countries, and we call upon the nuclear powers to pledge themselves not to use nuclear weapons against any Mediterranean state which does not allow the deployment of such weapons on its territory. The Soviet Union has suggested holding a representative conference analogous to that on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

This position has been reaffirmed in the Soviet government's reply to the statement of the non-aligned Mediterranean countries which took part in the Brioni meeting. The Soviet Union, the reply says, deeply understands the non-aligned countries' desire to strengthen security in the region and expresses its readiness to promote dialogue with them with the aim of making the Mediterranian a zone of stable peace and cooperation. ■

Strengthening peace and security in the Asian-Pacific region and developing fruitful cooperation between the countries of the area have recently moved to the forefront in international affairs. That is why top-level contacts between the countries of the region are so important.

The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, made an official visit to this country at the end of July-beginning of August. We bring you the interview he gave New Times correspondent Alexander Usvatov.

Mr Prime Minister, how would you sum up the results of your visit to the Soviet Union?

A most interesting two-hour talk with Mikhail Gorbachev, and negotiations with leading Soviet government figures made it possible to have a fruitful discussion on some of the most important international problems and to identify promising areas in which to activate our cooperation in different fields, especially trade.

The ministers and businessmen who accompanied me met their Soviet colleagues and, as I understand it, in the course of their contacts came to a whole series of satisfactory agreements on cooperation and exchanges in various fields.

I believe that listing the Malaysian-Soviet documents that were signed is enough to illustrate the concrete step forward in developing relations between our countries. They are the protocol on political consultations, the agreements on marine transport, avoiding double taxation, and cooperation between the two Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

I am very pleased with the results of this, our first, visit to the Soviet Union, as we and the Soviet leaders called quite firmly for more intensive contacts and wider bilateral relations. Opportunities for expanding our contacts have increased noticeably in view of the dynamic changes now taking place in the U.S.S.R.

What impressed you most in your talks with Soviet leaders?

Their very great interest in consolidating peace and security in the Asian-Pacific region, to which both Malaysia and the Soviet Union belong.

Their desire to reduce tension everywhere.

Dialogue on topical issues

Their readiness to seek this in collaboration with all countries, including the United States. The unanimously adopted U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an end to the Iran-Iraq war is a good example of a form of multilateral cooperation that did not previously exist.

We return home with the firm conviction that the U.S.S.R. sincerely wishes to put an end to the arms race, especially the race in nuclear arms. And it is acting with initiative, putting forward more and more new proposals. The Soviet commitment to eliminate medium-range missiles in Asia, along with those in Europe, if the U.S.A. does the same is a very important positive step.

It's not hard to guess that pride of place among the international topics at the Moscow talks will have gone to a discussion of the situation in Asia and the Pacific.

Naturally. We agree with the peace proposals and initiatives on the problems of the Asian-Pacific region put forward by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok and developed in his recent interview to the Indonesian paper Merdeka. We support his constructive approach, his views, and his call for joint efforts.

But along with a coincidence of views, there exist differences between us on certain concrete issues, particularly on the Kampuchean and the Afghan questions. However, I believe the main thing to be that we agree on the following: international conflict situations should be resolved by political methods alone, and not by force of arms. And their settlement is an essential condition for reducing and relaxing tension in the region, and creating an atmosphere conducive to the strengthening of peace and greater mutual understanding.

What ways does ASEAN see of stabilizing the situation in Southeast Asia, and what concrete steps is it taking to achieve this end?

The ASEAN countries seek the formation of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia. That concept was proposed by Malaysia a long time ago. But for it to be realized what is needed first of all is a Kampuchean settlement. In our opinion, this should be based first and foremost on the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops from Kampuchea and on national reconciliation. Mutually acceptable decisions should be sought through dialogue, and patient discussions. The ASEAN countries are maintaining a dialogue with the countries concerned and putting forward their own proposals. I believe that the Soviet Union, too, can play an important and constructive role in suggesting ways of resolving the Kampuchea problem.

The idea of a nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia is now being increasingly actively discussed. Like the Soviet Union, we should like to see the whole world become nuclear-free. Then our region would automatically become so. But at present clearing Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean of nuclear weapons is a very complex task. Achieving this goal does not depend on the countries in the region alone, as ships belonging to the great powers with such weapons on board also ply its waters.

At the end of August Malaya-Malaysia will mark 30 years of independence. What has the country achieved, and what remains to be done?

We have in effect built a new country. Industry has developed, with an increasing part of its produce being exported, and an extensive infrastructure has been built. The health service and education have made great progress, especially in rural areas where they used to be virtually nonexistent. The distribution of material benefits has become fairer. The per capita national income has increased many times over and now stands at 2,000 dollars.

But of course problems remain, and they are many. The country's economy is being affected by the unfavourable prices that have developed in recent years on the world market. Malaysia still has to forge firm unity between all the nationalities inhabiting it (the main ethnic groups in the country are Malayans and people of Chinese and Indian origin - **Ed.**). Although, of course, the different national and racial groups constantly discuss their problems at the negotiating table. The Cabinet includes representatives of all the main national communities, as does the parliament. If such peace had not reigned inside the country, we would never have achieved such tangible results in our social and economic progress. But I must say that we are far from being completely satisfied with our results.

As far as I know, fairly strong measures are being taken in Malaysia against drug abuse, and especially drug-trafficking. Harsh sentences are imposed on drug traffickers - up to and including the death penalty.

The drug situation is indeed serious. What disturbs us most is that an increasing number of young people have started taking drugs. And it is hard to identify all drug users. That is why we are taking such strict measures against those who are engaged in the illicit trade in drugs, and are selling it illegally. This is producing some results, but it is not an easy job. In Malaysia itself drugs are not produced. That is what gives such importance to cooperation with authorities in other countries, especially our neighbours in Southeast Asia. Exchange of information has been arranged with them.

We know that you personally attach great significance to the efforts to combat drug abuse on a worldwide scale. At the international conference in Vienna in June on combating drug trafficking you were elected chairman of this world forum.

That's right. The slogan of the conference was "Yes to life, No to narcotics." Senior representatives from more than 100 countries, including the Soviet Union, took part. The conference drew up comprehensive programme for stepping up action on a world scale to stop the illegal preparation, traffic in and underground distribution of this poison, and a programme for introducing effective methods of treating drug-users. The younger generation must be saved.

Presumably the fact that you are a doctor accounts for your great activity in this field. Do you regret having left your medical practice?

Of course, I miss medicine. But you can only do one thing at a time. ■

I read somewhere that Cuba recently celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of its membership of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. It was reported that the senior partners intended to pull Cuba up to their own level of development. But in view of the serious economic difficulties that are now besetting the first and only socialist country in the Western Hemisphere, they have not, as I understand it, been successful in doing so.

SERGIO MARTINEZ
Medellin, Colombia

TAKING UP A POINT

Our staff writer VLADISLAV CHIRKOV replies:

An uphill task

I should like to begin by drawing attention to the following. The task set within the framework of CMEA of levelling out the development of the member countries (and this applies not only to Cuba, but also to Mongolia and Vietnam) and eliminating the one-sidedness of their economic development is challenging and complex. It cannot be effected overnight by means of a couple of radical measures. It will probably take a long time. The past weighs too heavily. For centuries Cuba was a colony and a semi-colony, while Vietnam, which also suffered from having foreign "patrons," has still not recovered from the devastating wars that lasted decades.

And the target set is a difficult one, for in many respects it is necessary to reach the level of highly developed countries, such as, for instance, the German Democratic Republic, which ranks among the world's top ten in the per capita production of industrial goods.

But before turning to Cuba's present economic situation and the reasons for its development being less rapid than we would have liked, we should at least note its outstanding achievements in a variety of spheres, such as health, education and sports. You will probably find the following testimony interesting. An American industrialist, writing in the magazine Churchman, aknowledged that Cuba has achieved the highest standard of living of all of Latin America.

Yet in spite of its favourable tropical climate, the country has to ration certain foods. Cuba still has many overcrowded homes, and not all have the necessary amenities. Last year the plan for the construction of state housing was only 82.4 per cent fulfilled and in the cooperative sector, only 41 per cent. Of a total of 1,368 farm cooperatives, 279 have no electricity. In view of the power shortage TV transmissions had to be cut back recently by 5 hours on week days and two hours at the weekend.

Many of the difficulties and shortcomings that are holding back Cuba's development also beset the European socialist countries to a greater or lesser degree. There is probably no country that does not have its own brand of difficulties. Could you name such a country in Latin America? If everything had been going smoothly in the European CMEA countries they would, of course, have been able to render Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam more effective assistance.

Labour productivity is still very low in Cuba and this results in production capacities being underused. A third of all enterprises operate at a loss. The number of cooperatives operating at a loss increased from 11 per cent in 1982 to 30 per cent in 1985.

In the first issue of our magazine for this year we wrote of the negative trends, low labour discipline, abuses and distortions in the country's economic policy, and Cuba's current campaign to put things rights, so I shall not touch on that now.

But I feel special mention should be made of the heavy burden - in view of the smallness of the population - of its defence expenditure. This burden became even heavier after territorial units of people's militia were set up in addition to the regular Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior forces. For they too require a considerable amount of arms, as well as time off for training and exercises. All that is a loss to the economy. Does the United States (I see no other candidate) intend to attack Cuba? There may be different views on this subject, but as far as the Cubans are concerned, they prefer to have a strong defence.

Another important thing that has an adverse effect on the republic's economy is the U.S. trade boycott, as in the past the United States was Cuba's biggest partner.

The shortage of freely convertible currency also affects Cuba's economic programmes. As a result of a reduction in its currency earnings in 1986, Cuba was for the first time unable to honour its international obligations. The repayment of foreign debts had to be rescheduled.

Then there is Cuba's big debt to the socialist countries, although no one is demanding its immediate repayment (Cuba's debts on Soviet loans have been rescheduled, giving it a further 10, 15 and even 20 years to repay without additional interest). But one can well imagine how heavily this weighs morally on the Cubans.

How do the European members of CMEA plan to pull Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam up to the level of the more developed socialist countries? Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam have received and continue to receive assistance in developing their mining, manufacturing, power and agricultural industries. They enjoy certain privileges, for instance, preferential terms in getting loans and shaping foreign trade prices. The Soviet Union and other CMEA countries buy Cuban sugar, nickel and citrus fruits at much higher prices than those offered on the world market.

"Thanks to this aid," Fidel Castro noted recently, "we have achieved what we have today." But he went on to admit: "We must critisize ourselves for not having made the maximum use of the international aid received chiefly from

Union." The Cuban press has drawn attention to the ilure to make full use of the ipment and other material eceived from the U.S.S.R. and tries of the socialist commu- elays in installing imported lack of technological discip- e part of Cuban personnel, adequate use of specialists he U.S.S.R. and other fraternal n 1986 the plan for construc- ssembly work at cooperation as only 88 per cent fulfilled. ction facilities at new plants a long time to be used to

, however, does not lie only iban side - its CMEA partners blame. I can not speak for the ist countries, but of the Soviet can be said. On June l conference was held at the ttended by top officials of the onomy and foreign economic s. It was pointed out that considerable reserves for the effectiveness of the and operation of enterprises oviet economic and technical n Cuba, Mongolia and Viet- need was stressed for a sive solution to questions of , an optimal approach to the projects, stricter contract and greater responsibility of concerned for the satisfactory f obligations.

straightforward hard-hitting hat spared no one. In regard onomic ties with the three question, it was stated that rtcomings made it impossible he work of certain ministries tments as satisfactory. They awn the proper conclusions ecisions of the CC CPSU on economic cooperation with l countries.

words, perestroika is needed vell. Special significance is hed to the widespread intro- new progressive forms of , such as direct production ic links and the setting up of rises and associations.

ho have embarked on the building a new society have ercome - objective obstacles, mistakes and misconceptions, acherous desire at some time and relax. Although the more socialist countries also have of problems, they will not eir friends on this difficult

TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS

How is it that small private enterprises have been opened in a socialist country? Why should a person working for the state have less incentive to work harder and better than one working at a private enterprise? Do higher wages and greater purchasing power still carry so much weight and power in a socialist society?

I believe that in a socialist state an individual should be proud to work for his country.

GIOVANNA GROSSI DOSSENA
Milan, Italy

People here talk and write a lot about the changes in the U.S.S.R., but their interpretations differ. For instance, take the new law permitting individual labour. The owner of the shop I usually buy from said that the Soviets have at last revealed their weakness, and that the days of the planned economy are numbered. Personally I'm not so sure. It's more likely that, having taken this decision calmly, Russia has demonstrated once again to the whole world its strength and independence. How can small groups of producers undermine a mighty socialist economy that has developed over the decades? On the contrary, by expanding the supply they will only strengthen it. What's so bad about some businessmen making more money than usual? Thanks to their hard work others will be saved from standing hours in the queues our correspondents love to talk about.

HARVEY SOMES
Chicago, U.S.A.

FOLLOW-UP

It was with great interest that I read Vladimir Vesensky's article "An unreliable ally" (No.16, 1987) about the British military invasion of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands. The Argentine government had apparently hoped for U.S. support in the war, but it had forgotten the lessons of the past. History teaches us that the United States has never helped the peoples of Latin America - neither during their struggle for independence, nor when they won independence from colonial oppression and built up their strength.

MELCHISEDECK VIEIRA DOS SANTOS
Curitiba, Brazil

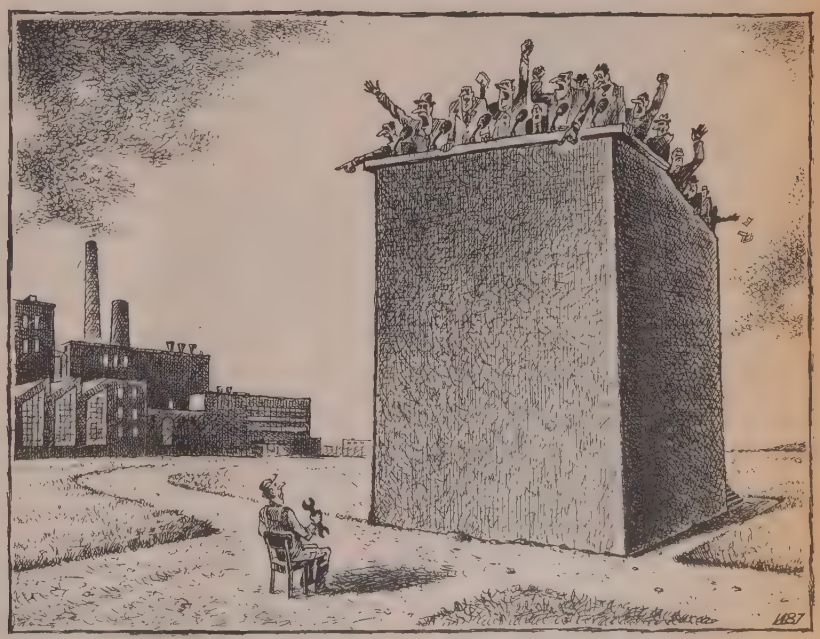
A READER'S QUESTION

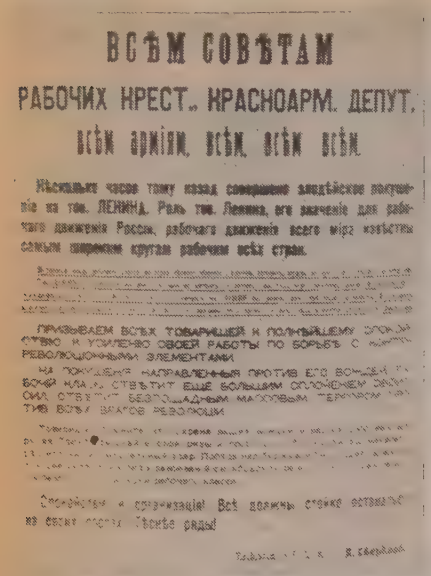
The press has carried many reports about the attacks of the U.S. Congress on the Japanese company Toshiba Kikai for having sold a few metal-cutting machine tools to the Soviet Union. Some U.S. legislators have even maintained that had this occurred during the war those responsible would have been shot. But U.S. companies even supplied nazi Germany with strategic raw materials and equipment, although the United States and Germany were at war. I'd like to ask American Congressmen through New Times: which executives of companies that traded with nazi Germany were severely punished, in accordance with war-time laws?

NIKOLAI NEDOREZOV
Severodvinsk, U.S.S.R.

Workman:
"My idea of perestroika is pulling this platform down and getting rid of these windbags."

Cartoonist Igor Smirnov contributes to the fight against demagogy. and red tape.





ВСѢМ СОВѢТАМ

РАБОЧИХ КРЕСТ., КРАСНОАРМ. ДЕПУТ.

ВСѢМ ВСѢМ, ВСѢМ, ВСѢМ ВСѢМ

THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

THAT FATEFUL AUGUST 30

INVESTIGATION BEGINS

WHO FIRST PLOTTED TO KILL LENIN

GENERAL KNOX: "WE SHOOT THEM!"

The appeal of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee to the nation.

Moscow, August 30, 1918

We have already carried retrospects on the history of the October Revolution relating not only to anniversary dates but also to painful, dramatic events - for instance, the struggle waged by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party for the Brest Peace. Why do we consider this necessary? Because the grandeur of the revolution consists in more than the triumph of its ideals, it consists also in its ability to set an example of peerless courage and high moral standards at times when the world seems plunged in darkness and evil.

Today we return to events of precisely this order. They relate to an aspect of the revolution which its enemies have long chosen as their favourite target for attack. Even today victorious socialism and the communist world outlook are accused of being involved in international terrorism. Now too, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, tales of "Red terror" are being resuscicated in the West and presented as an indispensable and all but the main method of revolution. Names and figures are cited - obviously with

For Lenin, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R., the day began with alarming news: it was reported from Petrograd that at 10 a.m. that day Uritsky, Chairman of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission, had been assassinated. Lenin instructed Felix Dzerzhinsky to leave at once for Petrograd to investigate. In Moscow, current affairs on the agenda included signing the minutes of the session of the Council of People's Commissars held the previous day and some other documents relating to internal and external affairs. In the afternoon of that day Lenin was scheduled to address two workers' meetings - one in the Basmanny and the other in Zamoskvorechye districts - both sponsored by the Moscow Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

Nikolai Bukharin, who had dinner that day with Lenin, tried to persuade him not to go to those meetings. Lenin's sister, Maria Ulyanova, also advised him against it. And when he refused to heed her advice, she begged him to take her with him.

"Under no circumstances," he said.

At about 5 p.m. Lenin left for the meetings. His wife Nadezhda Krupskaya had gone to a meeting devoted to public education. Lenin delivered his first speech at a meeting in Gavrikovsky Square on the premises of the former Grain Exchange, and afterwards answered written questions passed to him from the floor. It was quite late when the second meeting, held at the former Mikhelson factory in the Zamoskvorechye district, took place.

"We have only one way out - victory or death," Lenin said, winding up his speech.

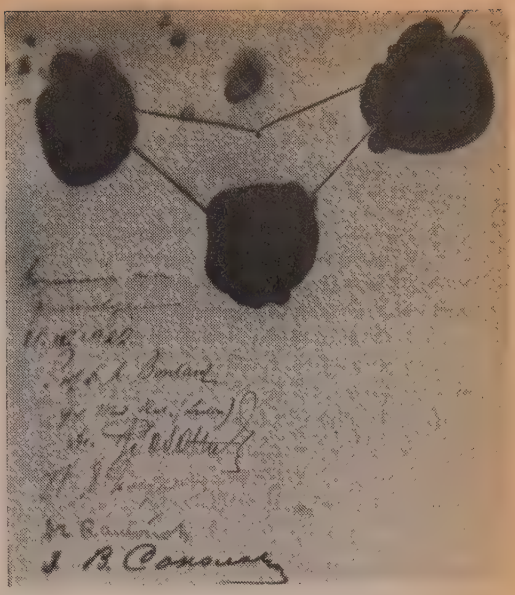
What happened when Lenin left the building and headed for the car waiting for him has been described time and again in memoirs and historical documents. We shall reconstruct these events as recorded by those whose painful task it was to investigate the dastardly crime. Dyakonov, Chairman of the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal, who was urgently summoned to the scene for this purpose, set to work at once.

Here are the complete unabridged texts of the evidence as it was recorded on that fateful night:

"Testimony of Stepan Kazimirovich Gil, lives in the Kremlin, Building No. 16, V.I. Lenin's driver. A communist sympathizer.

"I drove Lenin to the Mikhelson factory at about 10 p.m. When Lenin had entered the factory building, three women came up to me and one of them asked who was the speaker at the meeting. I said I did not know. One of them said, with a laugh: 'We'll find out.' When Lenin's speech ended after about an hour, a crowd of some 50 people from the meeting rushed to the car and surrounded it. After the crowd of 50 came Lenin, surrounded by women and men, and gesticulating with his hand. Among the people around him was the blonde-haired woman who had asked me whom I had brought. I heard her say that flour was being taken away from people and not allowed to be brought in to town. When Lenin was already three paces from the car I saw a woman's hand holding a Browning reach out from behind several people, at a distance of no more than three steps from him on the left side, and heard three shots fired, after which I rushed to the spot from

Lenin on August 28, 1918 - two days before the attempt on his life was made.



The bullet extracted from Lenin's body in 1922.

a view to capitalizing on the fact that the new generations (especially in the West) have no idea of what really happened in those stormy years.

True enough, those years were indeed stormy, and no little blood was spilled. But whose blood, who spilled it and why? What caused the "Red terror," why are these words to be found in the speeches of the leaders of the Russian revolution, in the documents of the newly-established Soviet government? Replying to these questions in the following documentary, we would like to reconstruct the political and psychological background of those years. The story of the victorious revolution would not be complete without recalling the difficulties it had to contend with, and without naming those who deliberately created these difficulties, provoked and plotted them.

This historical retrospect is based on authentic documents (some of them published for the first time), on the researches of Soviet historians, on memoirs and eyewitness accounts.

where the shots came, and the woman who had fired threw the revolver at my feet and disappeared in the crowd. The revolver lay there at my feet. I did not see anyone pick it up, but one of the two who supported the wounded Lenin told me he had kicked it under the car. When I bent over Vladimir Ilyich holding the revolver, a nurse grabbed hold of the revolver. Later this nurse and two other persons helped me to lift Lenin into the car and the four of us drove to the Kremlin where he was given first aid. Correction: one of the women asked me not who was speaking at the meeting but whom I had brought. Correction: it was after the first shot that I noticed a woman's hand holding a revolver.

August 30, 1918.

Stepan Kazimirovich Gil Dyakonov"

The second document in the file opened by Dyakonov was a record of the interrogation of N.Y. Ivanov, chairman of the factory trade union committee, who before the meeting began had noticed the woman who later fired at Lenin. The third document is the testimony of the man who succeeded in detaining the would-be assassin. This document reads:

"Stefan Nikolayevich Batulin, assistant military commissar, 5th Moscow Sov. Infantry Division. Lives at Zatsepa 23, apartment 16.

"At the moment when the people emerged from the meeting I happened to be at a distance of 10 or 15 paces from Comrade Lenin who was walking ahead of the crowd. I heard three shots fired and saw Comrade Lenin lying on the ground. I shouted: 'Stop him! Catch him!' and behind me I saw this woman who behaved strangely. When I asked her what she was doing there and who she was, she replied 'I didn't do it.' When I detained her and people in the surrounding crowd shouted that it was she who had fired the shots, I asked her again whether she had fired at Lenin and she said she had. We were surrounded by armed Red Army men and militiamen who prevented the crowd from lynching her and took her to the Military Commissariat of the Zamoskvorechye district.

August 30, 1918.

S.N. Batulin"

Then came the first statement made by the terrorist during interrogation:

"1918, August 30, 11.30 p.m.

"I, Fanya Yefimovna Kaplan - the name under which I was imprisoned at Akatui, the name I have used since 1906 - shot at Lenin today. I shot at him of my own accord. I do not remember how many times I fired. What revolver I used I will not say, I do not wish to give any details. I am not acquainted with the women who spoke to Lenin. I made up my mind long ago to shoot Lenin. I did not live formerly in Moscow and have never lived in Petrograd. The woman who was wounded in the shooting is absolutely unknown to me."

She was interrogated many times after that. She gave slightly more information about herself: before the revolution she had been an anarchist, later had joined the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (SR). But she continued to insist that she alone had made the attempt, that she had told no one of her intention and had consulted no one in the party about it. The same stand was taken by the Socialist-

Revolutionary leadership. In a special statement issued in September 1918, it dissociated itself from the terrorist act.

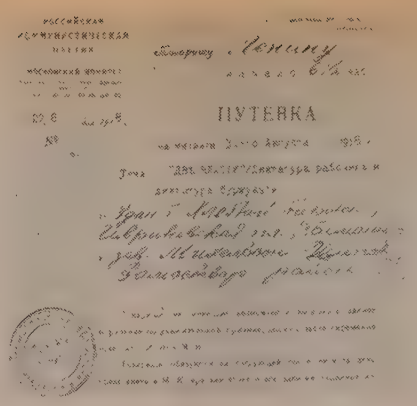
By the time Kaplan was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal (September 1918), all the hidden threads leading to Lenin's would-be assassin had not yet been fully revealed. Many of these threads were brought to light only four years later. At the end of 1922 the trial took place in Moscow **"of the Central Committee and individual members of other organizations of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party on charges of armed struggle against the Soviet power, plotting of murders and armed robberies, and treasonous connections with foreign states."**

It was established at this trial that terrorist acts - including acts against leaders of the Soviet Republic - were integral components of the dangerous political course steered by this party, which at one time had enjoyed considerable support among the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry of Russia. It had committed terrorist acts against tsarist satraps, and taken an active part in the Duma, and finally, played a leading role in the Provisional Government (Kerensky was a Socialist-Revolutionary). After the revolution, the party had split, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who had broken away from it had for a time been members of the Soviet government. However, as time went on it more and more irrevocably parted ways with the revolutionary people.

The subheadings of the indictment are in themselves indicative: **"First Attempt on the Life of Comrade Lenin...", "The Assassination of Comrade Volodarsky," "The Attempt on the Life of Zinovyev and the Murder of Uritsky," "The Second Attempt on Lenin's Life," "The Attempt on the Life of Comrade Trotsky."**

Individual terror against the leaders of the victorious Russian revolution was a weapon used not only by the SRs. Particular zeal in the use of terrorism was displayed by monarchist and sundry other Whiteguard organizations which from the first day of the revolution had declared a veritable war against the people's power. Besides the Whiteguard regiments of Yudenich, Krasnov, Kutepov and Kaledin, underground groups with active support from abroad, stopped at nothing in their efforts to restore the overthrown regime. For them terrorism became the favourite and at times the main method of struggle. And they aimed their fire of course at the central figures of the revolution, primarily at Lenin.

Today we can draw up something of an "inventory" of the terrorism of those days. However, in order to trace the criminal plans to their roots, it is necessary to go beyond the bounds of the period in question and look back to that preceding the October Revolution.


ПУТЕВКА

The paper authorizing Lenin to address workers' meetings on August 30, 1918. Issued by the Moscow Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

We will then learn facts that will shed altogether new light on the whole succession of attempted and realized assassinations that had its tragic culmination on August 30, 1918. No one will deny that were it not for the bullets fired by Kaplan, the leader of the Soviet government could have lived much longer.

Petrograd, July 1917

Some historical figures fade quickly from memory. Who, for instance, today remembers the name of David Rowland Francis, an American banker from St. Louis, governor of the State of Missouri and later, diplomat? Yet in 1917 he played a no small role in the capacity of United States ambassador to Russia. He began his ambassadorial service under tsarism, and at the time of the Provisional Government in the period between the February and October revolutions, he became an important figure in the political struggle in Russia.

True, opinions about Francis differed. One British diplomat of that distant time observed that he couldn't tell the difference between a SR and a potato. However that may be, Francis was the main source from which official Washington drew its assessments of the principal events in Russia. It was the ambassador who advised the State Department to recognize the Provisional Government at once, and he took great pride in having announced recognition of the new government four hours ahead of the British and French ambassadors.

The United States was greatly interested in Russia. One special mission after another was sent there. The first of these missions (June-July 1917) was headed by former Secretary of State Elihu Root. Prominent military and business tycoons (Crane, McCormick) came to Petrograd with him. Then there was a "railway" commission, headed by John Stevenson, one of the builders of the Panama Canal, to study the possibility of the participation of American capital in establishing control over the Russian railways. "That control will extend over a considerable portion if not over all the Siberian raulway," Francis assured the State Department. In July 1917 a special mission - the Red Cross mission - was sent to Russia by President Woodrow Wilson. It was headed by Wall Street magnate William Boyce Thompson, described by his contemporaries as a man who worshiped at the altar of the Almighty Dollar. His deputy was a man of a different calibre - Raymond Robins, a liberal who was associated with Russian émigrés in the United States. The Thompson-Robins mission was, so to speak, a second U.S. embassy in Russia.

But to return to Francis. Having become the admirer and mentor of the Provisional Government, Francis showed himself to be a diehard opponent of the Bolshevik Party. Here, for instance, is how he reacted to Lenin's return from abroad:

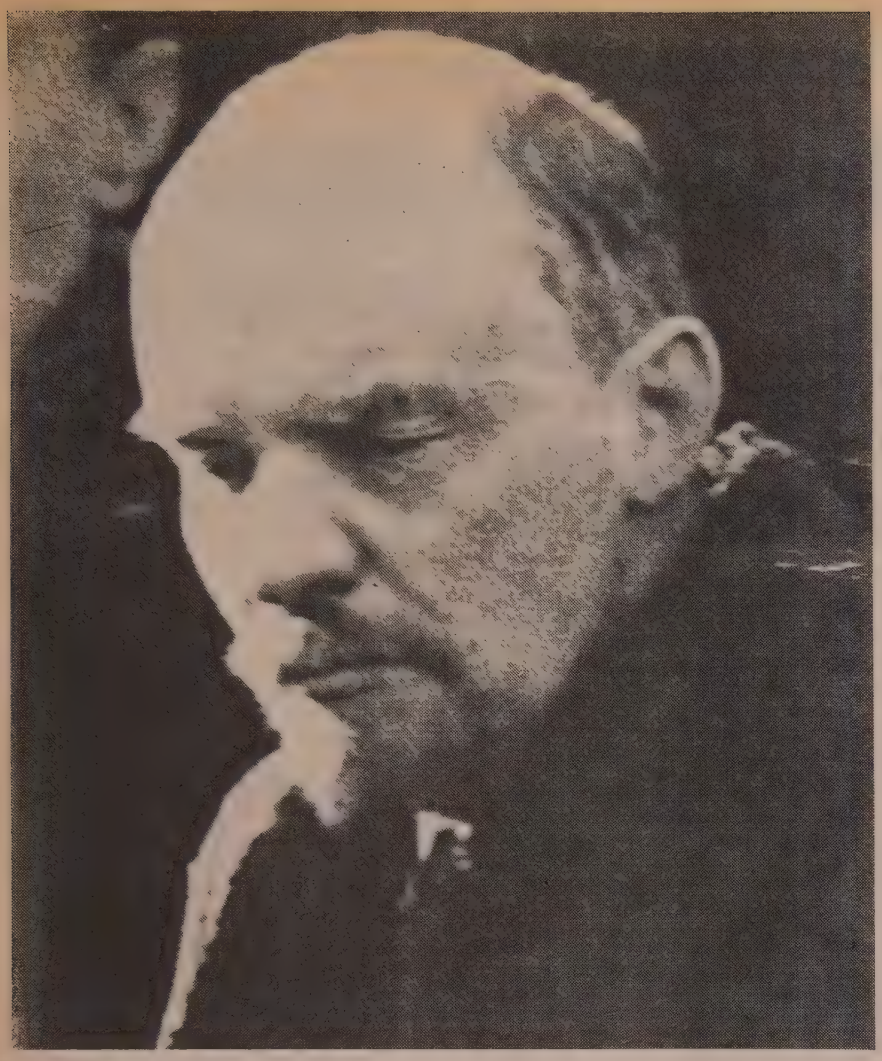
"Extreme socialist, or anarchist named Lenin is making violent speeches and threby strengthening the government (which is) designedly giving him leeway and will deport (him) opportunely."

This can hardly be called a penetrating assessment. It makes it easier to understand why the ambassador seized upon the "sealed railway car" and the "Bolshevik pro-German propaganda" fables. On June 23, 1917, he assured the State Department that **"Bolsheviks are maintained by German money which the Russian Government believes but hesitates to charge in the absence of convincing proof."**

One month after the victory of the October Revolution he reported with ludicrous conviction:

"I just heard from a source worthy of credence that the Smolny government is absolutely under control of the German General Staff."

This slanderous allegation was, unfortunately, destined for a long time (to this very day!) to be circulated by the Western press. True, in those distant days the yellow press was capable of levelling the wildest accusations at the Bolsheviks. For instance, it was claimed that they had been sent to Russia by none other than the Americans (a malicious inference drawn from the fact that several prominent members of the Party - Trotsky, Volodarsky and Uritsky - had at one time lived in exile in America). The London Morning Post went so far as to claim that 60 if not 90 per cent of the members of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet were Jews, and that Lenin's real name was Zerderblum (evidently confusing Lenin with Martov



Lenin on March 13, 1919.

whose real name was Zederbaum). But the most outrageous of all was the advice given by the author of the article: Russia's salvation lies in profuse bloodletting.

On this score the British diehards and the American emissaries saw eye to eye. In July 1917, Francis and his British opposite number Buchanan were among those who urged the Provisional Government to make short shrift of the Bolsheviks. On July 4, Francis called on Foreign Minister Tereshchenko and presented him with what was virtually an ultimatum: unless the Provisional Government put an end to the "disorders," he would advise Washington to cut off aid to it. The prominent American historian Frederick Schuman writes:

"After the July Days, Ambassador Francis protested to Tereshchenko at the failure of the authorities to take more severe measures against the Bolshevik leaders. He felt certain that the execution of Lenin and Trotsky... would make everything right."

Yes, it was Francis' idea to execute the Bolshevik leaders. In his memoirs published in 1921 he wrote:

"Had the Provisional Government at this time arraigned Lenin and Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders Russia probably would not have been compelled to go through another revolution."

Needless to say, it was not a matter of normal legal action but of a drumhead trial, in which the death sentence would be a foregone conclusion. Francis continues:

"The government may not have felt that it had the strength to do this, or may have feared the effect of executing Lenin and Trotsky would be to make martyrs of them and so strengthen their hold on their followers. Whatever may have been their reasons, I am persuaded now, as I felt at the time, that the government showed decided weakness. In fact, I so expressed myself at the time to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tereshchenko."

The U.S. foreign documents for 1917 that have been published do not contain any record of that conversation. But Francis himself confirms that he spoke to the Minister of the need to execute Lenin and Trotsky and to take "drastic action."

He adhered to this view later as well. On July 20 (after a talk with Prince Lvov, head of the Provisional Government), he informed his superiors:

"Lvov much pleased me, saying... leading Bolsheviks, including Lenin, have been arrested, publication of Pravda stopped."

We know that this was not the case. Lvov misinformed the American ambassador. Lenin guessed the counterrevolutionaries' plans and did not fall for "legal trial" bait. However, Francis continued to pin his hopes on the lynch-law prevailing. On August 6 he informed the State Department that he had contacted the SR Boris Savinkov who specialized in individual terrorism:

"Savinkov is considered an iron man who will mercilessly suppress Bolshevik outbreaks if they occur."

Today, 70 years later, one can only smile at the blind faith of the American diplomat and businessman in the power of brute force and bullets to halt the inexorable march of the revolution. But at the time it was a tangible threat. Hence it may be definitely said that the shameful distinction of being the first to advance the idea of the physical elimination of Lenin belongs to a prominent American political figure.

Francis was not the only representative of a foreign power who would gladly have seen this idea carried into effect. It is known that on October 21, 1917, i.e., a few days before the revolution, Colonel Thompson, head of the American Red Cross mission, met in conference with the heads of the Allied missions. At this meeting, the chief of the British military mission in Russia, General Alfred Knox said:

"The only thing in Russia today is a military dictatorship. These people have got to have a whip hand over them!"

"General," said Robins, "you may get a dictatorship of a very different character."

"You mean this Trotsky-Lenin-Bolshevik stuff - this soap-box stuff?"

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"Robins," said General Knox, "you are not a military man; you do not know anything about military affairs. Military men know what to do with that kind of stuff. We stand them up and shoot them."

"Yes, if you catch them you do," Robins replied. "I admit, General, I do not know anything about military affairs, but I do know something about folk and I think you are facing a folk situation."

But General Knox repeated:

"We shoot them."

(to be continued)

Beauty before gold

I don't think many people ever get a chance to go for a car ride by sea. Well, we did get such a chance after our Volvo had swept down an excellent but practically deserted motor road from the capital to Nampo, and then rolled onto a dam causeway eight kilometres long, with the sea waves dancing on either side. The dam stretched across a bay near the mouth of the mighty Tacdongan River, with Pyongyang lying a few miles upstream.

The dam and its shipping lock (named Western-Sea) are in a class by themselves. Together they were the biggest construction project in the country's history, Choe Young Gum, our guide (all tourist attractions offer guides in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) told us. The complex, she went on, cost four billion dollars to build. The lock handles ships with a displacement of up to 50,000 tons - about twenty a day, which is well below capacity. Each ship is let through in a matter of minutes by a rotary bridge built into the dam and a heavy lock gate weighing 1,500 tons.

Just how difficult it was to build the dam can be judged from the following figure: 3,000 cubic metres of earth had to be placed on each square metre of the seabed. A triptych (36 metres long, we were told) on display at the capital's picture gallery glorfies the epic heroism of the builders; the off-shore construction job demanded an all-out physical effort, fortitude, keen wit, expert knowledge and the utmost engineering precision.

What is the chief purpose of this enormous installation? We asked Li Chol, Deputy Director of the Western-Sea shipping lock administration.

The prime purpose was, he told us, to make all-round use of the Tacdongan River. A man-made lake of about 300 sq km has been formed between the river mouth and the dam. This enormous body of fresh water will irrigate salinized soils in Pyongan-namdo and Hwanghae-namdo provinces. The aim is to increase crop yields and reduce farm produce costs. The man-made lake will supply water to the industrial plants and population centres in the lower reaches of the Tacdongan. The water level in the river has risen, making it navigable for heavier vessels. The lake is eminently suitable for pisciculture, and plans are afoot to set up a network of fish-farms there.

Second, the links between the two neighbouring provinces have become much closer. Previously, travelling to Hwanghae from Nampo meant a journey of 350 km as against one of 20 km today. The top of the dam is wide enough to accommodate not only a concrete motor road but a railway as well, and the two have dramatically increased the goods turnover between the provinces.

Third, important changes are expected to take place in areas adjacent to the river mouth. New villages and towns will emerge; recreation zones will be laid out, and sanatoria, rest homes and children's camps built.

"We have designed, built and equipped the lock on our own," Li Chol stressed. "Choosing the dam-site was the most serious problem of all. There was a great deal of heated debate, and different viewpoints were voiced. In the end, the site was selected by Comrade Kim Il Sung, who put to sea on a ship for the purpose."

When the project had just been approved, some Western hydraulic engineering experts visited the place. "You will never manage it without our help and without our equipment," their verdict was. They proved wrong. Two months after the dam had been completed, it withstood an acid test. A furious typhoon hit the area, hurling huge billows at the dam. Moreover, torrential rains in the upper reaches of the Tacdongan increased the river's runoff. The dam found itself sqeezed between two waters, but it held out. It was not in vain that the designers of the dam had provided against likely natural disasters and given a thorough analysis to the meteorological record of the area.

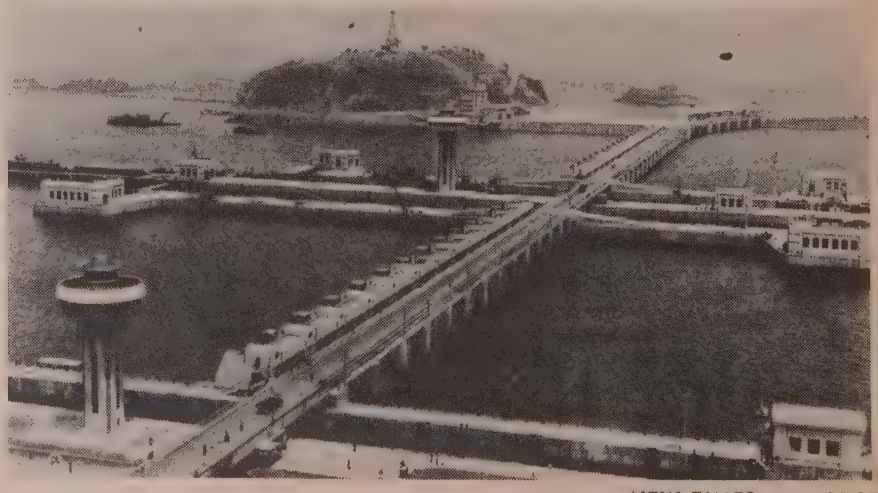
Pak Dong Hwang representing the Land and Water Management Board under the D.P.R.K. Administration Council told us that in the case of the Western-Sea shipping lock, all the problems associated with nature conservation had, as is the practice, been dealt with at the design stage. This organization sees to it that industrial and other construction does no harm to the environment, that new industrial installations are built beyond town limits, and that old ones improve their production techniques with a view to minimizing ecological damage.

When designing a project, Pak Dong Hwang said special provisions are made to harmonize it with its surroundings. A permanent body comprising representatives of all the organizations having to do with the project's construction and operation is set up. The Nampo dam and the Western-Sea shipping lock were cases in point. The new hydraulic structure is having wholesome effect on the environment. Previously, seawater found its way into the river, salinizing its banks. Now we are making this land fertile again. The water exchange system has been improved: previously, the river bed in the estuary was exposed at low tide, and now it is well covered with fresh water. The overall rise in the air temperature in the dam area is also a factor favourable to agriculture, Pak Dong Hwang said.

The board he represented discharged a variety of functions which were not confined to control and consultations. Pak Dong Hwang told us

The trans-bay dam off Nampo.

Photo from a booklet put out by the Korea Publishers



that much was being done to preserve natural wealth and gradually to replenish it. A nationwide nature conservation movement had grown up. Monthly tree planting, bird, animal, flora and water protection campaigns follow hard on each other's heads.

Forestry is an object of special concern. It is hard and fast rule in the P.D.R.K. that if you cut down one tree, you must plant ten. The wounds inflicted on the country's forests during the Japanese occupation and the American invasion have long healed.

In various parts of the country we saw large groups of people carrying spades, hoes and other gardening tools. Every office , factory, farming cooperative and school has a tract of land allotted to it to grow trees on. And people are making every effort to implement the plan to plant two million hectares of new woodland in the next few years.

Myohyang, one of the country's most beautiful mountains, is clad in a solid, fluffy green carpet. Its slopes are graced, here and there, with waterfalls, each with its own name and temperament: the roaring Pison and jet-like Ryongyon, the trolicsome Murung racing down over the boulders and the broad Kuchung, the serene Chontae blending into a greenish lake, and the precipitous Isonnam. They are not merely beautiful, even such epithets as magical or enchanting give only an approximate idea of them.

Steps hewn in rock, or cast in concrete in places, make it easier for the countless tourists to climb to the mountain peak, two kilometres high. This unusual stairway is railed off with lengths of chain stretched between pillars. Every provision has been made for as many people as possible is enjoy the beauty of Mt.Myohyang.

Just imagine that we might never have feasted our eyes on this magnificent mountain even if we had come to this place! Geologists found gold in its entrails. Mining it was considered in earnest. It was a question of choosing between a few tons of gold and a gem of scenic beauty. The nation opted for beauty.

●

On August 15, the North Koreans celebrated the 42nd anniversary of their liberation from Japanese colonial domination. On the eve of that date, the Sonchon dam, the sixth on the Tacdongan, was made operational. Working people and schoolchildren put in an extra effort on the forestry plots allotted to them; and new groups of tourists climbed to Mt.Myohyang to admire the fantastic landscapes of their country from its summit.

VLADIMIR ZHITOMIRSKY
and LEONID MLECHIN
our special correspondents

Pyongyang — Moscow

Much ado about nothing

or what is the Norwegian company's sin

Day or night, storm or calm, Soviet submarines put out to sea on patrol duty. The international situation, alas, still makes this essential. And the onus for it does not lie entirely with this country.

A furore, however, has recently blown up in Washington: Soviet subs have become very hard to detect and track. What has happened!

It appears that the noise level from submarines has dropped perceptibly, with a resultant loss in the efficiency of SOSUS, the American submarine detection system. It helps the U.S. naval command to spot and identify Soviet submarines leaving base. Of course, SOSUS is not all powerful. This is why special patrol planes, helicopters, ships and reconnaissance facilities are widely used to verify initial data. They all rely on SOSUS tips.

And now the Pentagon has sounded the alarm. In spite of enormous spending to upgrade the system, it becomes increasingly difficult for it to detect Soviet submarines. Any admission that this is a result of higher technical standards of shipbuilding in the U.S.S.R. and the prowess of Soviet submariners would jeopardize the myth of the inferiority of Russian science and engineering and dispel the legend of U.S. naval supremacy. So it has been alleged instead that the U.S.S.R. has benefited from defence technologies "smuggled" in by Japanese and Norwegian businessmen.

A chisel would do

The tribulations of the Toshiba corporation, which has been accused of supplying the lathes that have enabled the Russians to manufacture almost noiseless propellers for thier subs, are now widely known. To give its campaign greater scope, Washington has now extended related charges to Norway. The U.S. Defence Department maintains that the firm Kongsberg has exported numerical control devices for the Japanese machine tools to the U.S.S.R. With the Pentagon clamouring that the act of "industrial sabotage" will force the United States into spending dozens of billions of dollars to modernize SOSUS, the American Congress is putting the finishing touches to a bill on sanctions against Toshiba and Kongsberg. It is expected that the import of their products to the U.S. will be banned for between two and five years.

"There is no connection between Kongsberg's sale of equipment to the U.S.S.R. and the fact that the Soviet Union is building 'quiet' submarines that are difficult to ditect," says Jarl Johnsen, chief of a department at the Norwegian Defence Ministry's research institute. According to him, the Soviet submarine fleet has been undergoing phased modernization for at least 20 years. The institute's data indicate that the noise level from the submarines of the Soviet fleet diminishes by "one scale graduation" every year, and this means that the distance at which a sub can be heard is reducing.

"The noise abatement problem is not confined to propellers," Johnsen continues. "The reactor, steam turbvines and other rotating parts of equipment make a lot of noise as well."

Finn Lied, head of the Defence Ministry's research institute, rejects the U.S. charges just as vigorously. Only a layman could believe that Kongsberg has made Soviet submarines a gift of "quiet" propellers, he says. It is vital to know which form to give propellers and Kongsberg's numerical control devices are no help in this task. Moreover, propellers can be made with just a file and a chisel, though, of course, this would be slow work.

The Pentagon's arguments have also drawn smiles from experts attending an international conference on propeller technology in Trondheim, Norway. Specialists know well that the first Soviet low-noise submarine of a new class, designated Sierra in NATO countries, was launched before the ill-starred lathe deliveries from Japan.

A scandal has nonetheless blown up and the Norwegians have found themselves being dragged into it. Faulted Kongsberg may be in for a severe punishment: it is not to be ruled out that

its American competitors will now get its tentative multimillion-dollar contract to supply a large batch of Penguin sea-launched missiles to the U.S. Navy.

Oslo's concessions on other issues are another likely consequence of the cooling-off between Norway and the U.S. At any rate, the Norwegians have already agreed to pursue "more active cooperation" with the U.S. in the North Atlantic.

"Strategic" technology?

It is noteworthy that as the scandal involving Kongsberg reached its crescendo, Norwegian authorities decided to expel several Soviet representatives. They were accused of attempting to "obtain access to high technology," although, according to a statement by the Norwegian government, they were not linked with the Kongsberg case in any way. The sponsors of the campaign against Kongsberg, as is customary in such cases, have explained their actions by invoking the secret lists of goods banned for sale to the U.S.S.R., which are compiled by COCOM, an organization controlling exports from capitalist to socialist states.

"For us the COCOM rules do not exist," says Lev Korolyov, Soviet trade representative in Oslo. "We have never seen any inventories of banned goods. If Norwegian firms have a list of countries they may not sell their products to, that is their problem. Our task abroad is to buy the necessary goods, which are technically advanced and meet modern requirements."

Discontent with COCOM's omnipotence is growing in Norway. Formed in 1950 on the U.S. insistence, it embraces all NATO countries (except Iceland and Spain), and Japan. Its mission is to restrict the sale of military and, lately, also "dual-purpose" equipment and technologies to socialist countries in every possible way. Experience has demonstrated, however, that the "dual-purpose" formula can be applied to practically any product. COCOM functions in strict secrecy. It is not subject to political control, for example by the parliaments of the states represented.

Is it surprising then that the Norwegian Storting is unaware of the contents of the lists, if even the very fact of Norway's participation in COCOM was learnt by the public only two years after the organization was founded? In Oslo they are now expressing bewilderment. But it is on the initiative of the foreign ministers of Norway and France that those lists have been made secret.

"By an irony of fate Norway is now suffering from the COCOM rules," says Tor Egil Förland of the Norwegian Peace Research Institute. "There is perhaps no other country that could abide by COCOM's instructions so unswervingly. The example of Kongsberg is scaring Norwegian firms away from trade with the East."

Förland, who has conducted COCOM-related studies for many years, believes that the outcry over an ordinary commercial deal has been prompted by a U.S. desire to deliver yet another blow to Japan in the trade war between the two countries. He is right, but only partially.

Politics and propaganda

Military considerations should be seen as another and no less important factor. Western experts regard nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) as an important stabilizing element in the strategic equilibrium between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union, which has declared its renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons, takes this into account in its military-political doctrine, although it does not consider nuclear deterrence a reliable security guarantee. It should also be remembered that the SSBNs' share in the American strategic triad is very large.

The U.S. would like to preserve its own SSBNs for fighting a protracted nuclear war by trying to destroy Soviet ones even before the application of nuclear weapons and a first disarming strike at the U.S.S.R. in the event of a potential conflict, as well as to lock the Soviet submarines at their bases. It is this purpose that is served, in the final analysis, by anti-submarine warfare facilities, and the secret tracking of every Soviet SSBN with the help of SOSUS. Plans are being hatched of the development of U.S. submarines capable, at an early stage of confrontation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., of putting Soviet missile carriers out of action and giving Washington the possibility to deal a nuclear strike against Soviet territory at the required moment.

But now the Americans are worried: their "killer submarines," as they call them, are finding it increasingly difficult to "track down prey."

The Soviet Union has proposed resolving the problem by signing an agreement on special areas free from anti-submarine defences. The U.S., however, has refused to agree to this. The Pentagon's contractors are busy pushing a project for developing a "supersub." Each of the new-generation submarines will cost an estimated 1,700 million dollars. The first is planned to be commissioned in 1994. But the attitude in Congress to the Navy's latest project, code-named Sea Wolf, has so far for a number of reasons been very reserved.

Drawing by I.Smirnov

It is in the light of the uncertain fate of Sea Wolf in Congress that the Pentagon has fired its propaganda weapons, producing the Toshiba and Kongsberg cases. The flare-up of political passions has alarmed not only the Japanese and the Norwegians but also the occupants of Capitol Hill in Washington. The representatives and senators will now hardly dare object to appropriations for building the new "killer submarines," the more so as featuring prominently among the best sellers in the American book market at present are "The Hunt for Red October," "Sink the Potyomkin" and other potboilers devoted to Soviet submarines. These same books are selling briskly in Oslo as well.

An amazing set of coincidence! The spectre of an "enemy" and a "Soviet military threat" hovering over the Norwegian fjords.

ALEXANDER POLYUKHOV
our own correspondent
Stockholm

THE VOLGA PEACE CRUISE

TOBY MOFFETT

No sooner had our plane entered Soviet airspace than I heard over my earphones the tune of a song performed by the popular American rock group U-2. I thought of Gary Powers: my first trip to the Soviet Union... and U-2.

But, first, how had I come to set off on a trip to the Soviet Union?

I learned of the Volga peace cruise from friends, who told me that Americans have travelled down the Volga in this way every summer since 1982 and that Soviet people made their first voyage down the Mississippi last year.

I talked my wife Myra into going on the cruise, as I did not have any remaining vacation days to take. We discussed how the video tapes could be sent through Aeroflot to Connecticut so as to be shown on television without delay.

WVIT, at which I do news twice a day, is considered a local station. In fact, millions of people on the east coast - in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts and Vermont - watch it.

I went to my news director and the head of my station and said: "By the way, Myra is going on the Volga cruise." And they said in reply: "Why don't you go?"

It bothered me that I had passed up several opportunities to visit the Soviet Union while I was in Congress. It happened that on each occasion I was very busy.

And so I flew to Moscow for the first time. What kind of people are the Russians, I wondered.

As a journalist, I began to learn the answer through interviews. I soon found that Soviet people are different from Americans. Russians seem restrained. As a rule, they are shy before a television camera, hesitant to answer or all saying the same thing. That was unnatural and unusual for me. Sometimes it was boring to see people behaving like that. But I guess the difference between Americans and Russians is emotional rather than ideological.

There is, however, the other side to the coin.

I think all the Americans on the Volga cruise came to the Soviet Union with the conditioning - and I use a very mild word - the conditioning they have had over the years from childhood. When we talk about propaganda, we like to talk about other countries, not about our own.

Many of us had had teachers at school who said: "You can never trust Russians, they are trained to lie." It was not government -sponsored instruction and was not written down in the textbooks. It was part of the American way of life with its fear of the Russians.

For this reason the daily contact on board the ship and in Volga-side cities with those who admit to living in a well organized and monolithic society, a society which for many Americans personifies the "empire of evil," was a real jolt to many participants in the cruise, particularly those who had come to the Soviet Union for the first time.

It struck my fellow-travellers and was something of an irritant, that some of the events were unspontaneous. That's very European, I think. Americans are used to more improvisation. During the cruise, however, we witnessed so many manifestations of the Soviet people's dedication to peace that none of the great Broadway producers could have organized them.

I caught myself thinking that Soviet people look better, happier and healthier and the country more beautiful then I had expected.

One Soviet member of the cruise asked me: "Are you glad to be here?" "I am more than glad," I replied. "This is the kind of trip that really changes your life."

For my part I asked Russell Post, a delegate to the last national Republican convention and a former Connecticut state Senator, who was on the cruise with his four children: "What if a quarter of a million American families and a quarter of a million Soviet families did the same?" He replied that the effect of this would be impossible to overestimate.

What strikes me is the isolation of our societies from each other. There are similarities at the same time. I have discovered many common values. We both have black marks in our history. The Russians criticize us in terms of their values, and we criticize them in the same way. But if we take the way our societies are run, we can get along with each other quite well.

One day I stood at the gates of a tractor plant in Volgograd, watching workers going home after their shift. I have some experience of such observation. During election campaigns I often had to drive up to factories in my constituency and shake hands. In Volgograd it was just like home. The workers looked as tired as they do at home, and they reacted to questions in the same way. I understood that they are also trying to earn their livings, support their families, and are doing what they have to do - save a little money, go fishing, and spend time with their children.

While in Congress I constantly raised the issues of arms control and the reduction of tensions, and voted for broader exchanges of people. Here in the Soviet Union I realized how right and necessary this was.

It is no accident that the American and Soviet members of the cruise worked out and signed the Volga declaration expressing their determination to get rid of nuclear weapons and begin a new era in relations between the two countries.

I want to mention two more events, equally memorable but quite different in their significance.

Mamayev Hill. The monument to the soldiers who fell in battle during the second world war. The faces of people watching the changing of the guard. Faces lit up with the memory of the war.

A football game by the Volga. After we had landed on an island, Myra and I went swimming and saw Russians playing football. I said: "I want to play." And she replied: "So go and play." "I don't think I'm good enough," I noted, "and then I don't know if I should." We played for two hours, and one more game on another island. We played to exhaustion - they and I, in one team.

As I now see it, the cruise went by very quickly. For me the work is only beginning. The interviews I did in the Soviet Union will be featured for five nights in the evening news programme, and there will be a special half-hour newscast wholly devoted to the peace cruise.

There is now tremendous interest in the United States in what is happening in the Soviet Union. Americans are tired of what their politicians tell them about the current restructuring drive in the U.S.S.R. Those who have not yet been able to come to the Soviet Union want at least to see something on television.

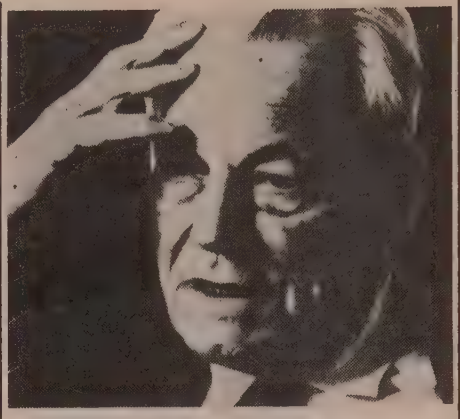
It is dangerous to write about further plans, but I shall nevertheless disclose them. I want to come to the Soviet Union and make a ten-hour documentary series intended for 20-year-old viewers about young people.

■

Toby Moffett sat for Connecticut in the House of Representatives for eight years. At present he is a leading commentator at the WVIT television station.

TO BE MORE EXACTING OF ONESELF THAN OF OTHERS

"Human rights: how they are distorted and misused" is the title of a book recently published in the F.R.G. by Willy Brandt, until recently leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and President of the Socialist International.



Horrifying evidence still comes to light - and in some places even more frequently than in the past - of what disregard for human dignity and the violation of human rights lead to: torture and murder, persecution and humiliation affecting many thousands. I find it heartening that numbers of young people are taking part in the battle for human rights and dignity, and not only in their own countries, although, indeed, demanding higher standards of one's own country than of others is an index of one's political maturity.

The fruitless discussions as to whether "collective" (or "social") rights are as important as individual human rights lead nowhere. I cannot agree with the continuing attempts to brush aside **collective** rights (the right to peace and development, good health, a job, education, social security) as not being classic rights and, at best, additional or "eastern" rights. It is senseless to equate the so-called "western" interpretation of human rights with **individual** rights and freedoms. Both East and West it is above all a question of the right to life itself. Without life there can be no dignity, no natural rights. For the threat of inevitable death from hunger or other inescapable deprivations is hardly less dangerous than the executioner in a police state.

The sharp contrast between the replete (including the satiated) and the hungry section of mankind bears out daily that the most important human rights begin with the right to life. For how can people know anything, or implement such basic rights as the inviolability of personal freedom, freedom of religion and opinion, protection from arbitrary actions, if they are not properly guaranteed the right to elementary survival? And that means it is not only a question of saving the world from hunger, but also of doing everything to help prevent nuclear war, which would devastate everything (or at least almost everything).

I regard as reprehensible (and inhuman) the oft-repeated attempts to oppose freedom and peace. If people cannot survive, the question of the **forms** of their coexistence does not arise.

The principal right to life is menaced by the hidden threat to peace and the barbaric absence of a just order, as a result of which millions of people die of hunger each year. Only when life is guaranteed and despair conquered can the hope be born that conditions will emerge for what we call individual or civic rights. I have long believed that this principle should be self-evident to all, irrespective of party affiliation.

The principal social rights should not be understood as existing solely to protect the individual from society or the state. They are called on to help determine and ensure each person's place in society and the state. What human rights policies largely lack is sincerity, unless they stem from the need to defend human life and dignity - as a whole - from mass destruction and, in particular, from abuse by the authorities, humiliation and cruelty. The comprehensive ethics of human rights demand recognition of the fact that the right to a life worthy of the name and, certainly, to inviolability, can be claimed only by a person who is not threatened with death from hunger.

Until wars are outlawed - especially in our age of weapons of mass destruction - the struggle for human rights will lack one decisive factor. This is also true of a world whose whole population could be fed, but where millions are doomed to die of hunger, or become victims of epidemics that need never have occured. As long as large numbers of people eke out a pitiful existence in extreme poverty, it is not only their personal dignity that is being trampled on, but human dignity as a whole, not to speak of respect for individual rights.

This unbreakable relationship was underlined in the draft of the new programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in 1986: individual and social rights cannot replace each other and should not be counterposed. It is difficult to implement the right to life and personal inviolability (and therefore to ban violance and torture) where hunger and social poverty make a mockery of human dignity. "Only when man's social rights have been realized can his individual rights be observed by all and guaranteed for all. Only when the individual rights of a person are respected, and above all his right to freedom of speech, can there be a free exchange of views and people can independently exercise their right to sufficient food, employment and education." The conclusion: "Only individual and social rights taken together make it possible to live a life worthy of man."

Mahatma Gandhi called poverty the most obscene form of violence. The church tells us insistently that malnutrition is the hidden face of mass murder in our times. Our friend from Britain, the statesman and writer William Clark, who died in 1985, a man with great experience in the field of development aid, said that poverty could possess the destructive force of plutonium. And French writer (and presidential advisor) Régis Debray pointed out that the geography of human rights violations in many respects coincides with the geography of hunger.

The fight against hunger and need, and for peace and development is indissolubly linked with the fight for human rights. Human dignity, interpreted and outlined differently in changing historical conditions, requires - first, the implementation of the right of **each** individual to a life worthy of man, and, secondly, the equal responsibility of each to ensure that all can lead a life worthy of man.

The principal human rights, which were proclaimed on a worldwide scale following the second world war, and adherence to which is professed in numerous declarations, are still continuing to be trampled on, if not worse, in many parts of the world. It is true that the dictatorships in Southern Europe and Latin America have fallen, and corrupt and cruel regimes in some Asian and African countries have been replaced,

Willy Brandt. Menschenrechte misshandelt und missbraucht. Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1987.

but, on the whole, the world statistics of terror and injustice remain so grave and depressing that many people no longer react to them.

I have never mistaken the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights for the reality. But nor could I ever have thought that after the nazi crimes there would be so many throwbacks to barbarism in the four decades following the end of the war.

The fight against terrorism, the deprivation of civic rights and mass hunger is not an easy one, but it is a constant stimulus to those who without much detriment to themselves could come out in defence of the demands of their conscience and the ideals of humanism.

Humanism requires accuracy: we must know the figures that reflect the bitter need of many on the planet, but not merely to depress ourselves. It is now important to concentrate on - and direct the actions of our governments to - the real situation in the world in which we live.

I stress that the most flagrant violations of human rights are experienced by those who lack the prime necessities for survival.

- A quarter of mankind is very poor, and for the greater part ekes out an existence below subsistence level; half of mankind has adequate nourishment, and a quarter lives in abundance. A simple comparison shows that the average incomes of people in the Western industrialized countries are 40 times higher than the incomes of most of the rest of the world's population.

- About 500 million suffer from malnutrition or simple hunger.
- 15 million children die yearly from hunger or easily treated diseases before the age of 5. That is 41 thousand a day, or 28 a minute.

And so there remains the same crying contradiction between what is possible and what is not being done. It is at the same time the contradiction between the arms race, which devours thousands of millions of dollars, and world hunger, which could be overcome by using a fraction of that money.

Yet all the time there is uncompromising talk about human rights in the "traditional" sense of the history of the European and North American constitutions. From this perspective the question looks simple: can the challenge take a more acute form than the deliberate destruction of human life as practised by government to remove political opponents or simply dissidents, or those who disagree with the views of the majority? I have already written about the disappearance of individuals who stand in the way, but no less common place are deliberate murders designed to intimidate political opponents, and the massacre of entire groups.

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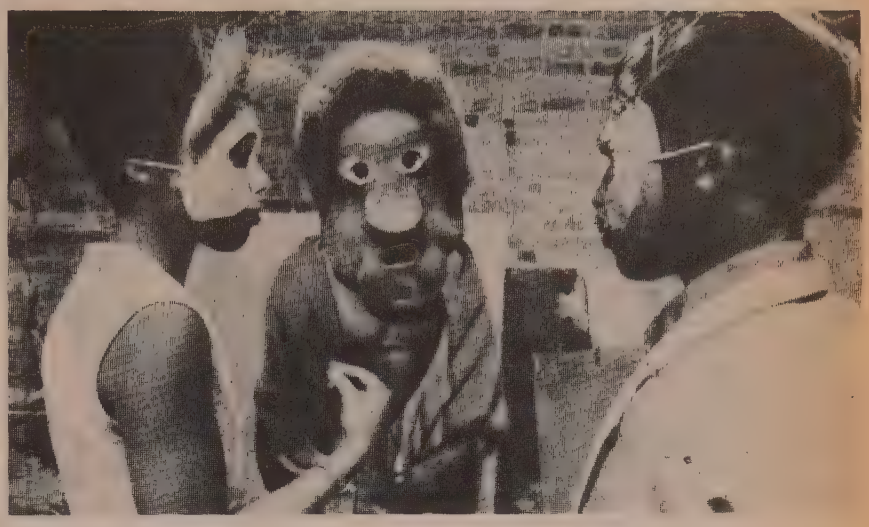
Applause and truncheons



From somewhere at the back of the improvised stage comes a booming sound, reverberating with a long echo as if from a cathedral cupola: Ding, dong, dong, dong.... A group of half-naked warriors in leopard skins perform a ritual dance, leap into the air and with a sort of whistle fall back to the floor. The sound of the traditional tam-tams, the rhythmic drummings of feet, and the symbolism of quick gestures - all creates in the audience a sense of the unvanquished human spirit. An illuminated panel switches on: June 16. The date of the bloody repression of the people of the Johannesburg suburb of Soweto in 1976. The angry face of a black African, fist raised in the traditional victory salute.... And from the back of the stage the chorussed refrain: "We shall overcome.... We will win...."

That is the prologue to one of the productions of the black revolutionary theatre, a company consisting exclusively of representatives of South Africa's indigenous population. The company was formed at the beginning of the 1960s. That was when the talent of Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright - today known worldwide and a Nobel Prize winner - flourished. His striking plays lashed out, as one African art critic put it, against "a world in the power of the forces of death - injustice, oppression, exploitation and the thirst for power."

The African people's theatre, or as it is also called, the theatre of struggle, is a remarkable phenomenon. It derives from the wide variety of art forms rooted in the original traditional culture of the people of the continent. In those countries of Africa that have won their freedom the people's theatres are, as a rule, run by individual enthusiasts. Many innovators are familiar with the Stanislavsky method, but more often than not they regard drama as an artistic form of protest against social evils.

In the South African theatre, pride of place goes to the passionate call for a struggle, including armed struggle, for the abolition of the fanatical system of oppression. The local racists have retaliated by branding it as the "fist stage" and "rebel communist theatre."

What in reality are the aims of the theatre, what are its themes and who are its authors and actors?

"Police" and police

...The absence of any advance publicity in no way affected the number of people in the audience - the hall was packed. "The Ghost of Change" is a dialogue between two political prisoners. The part of prisoner No. 4 was played that day by Lebua Shoba and that of prisoner No. 5 by Joko Scott - popular actors and producers of the MEDU Arts Ensemble, an underground theatre in South Africa. Again and again, in the course of the play, the actors spoke directly to the audience. And the hall

reacted to what was happening on the stage. There were cries and comments. The actors did not let them hang in the air, but answered with improvisations....

Typical of the theatre of the deprived, as this form of art is also known, is the use of symbolic language, no character specialization on the part of the actors, and the abandonment of conventional stage effects. Actors often improvise as they go along, and in the course of the play can turn from oppressed to oppressors and the other way round, using the simplest of props - white paint and a colonial hat.

They don't always have premises. For instance, the small Black Theatre Group led by Peter Makhari resorts to guerrilla tactics for its revolutionary sketches: it chooses a busy corner and carries out a blitz raid - in the form of an anti-racist sketch....

...A dusty spot in Orlando, a district of Soweto. In the shade of a huge acacia a satire is acted out. There is no preliminary announcement, yet people gather from all around - adults and children alike. The producer explains to his audience that the action is taking place on a noisy street in Johannesburg.... Among the assembled crowd are "shoeshine boys," who can brush your shoes till they gleam like a mirror. There are also "cigarette peddlers," and watching over them all are a few "white policemen" with pistols and truncheons at the ready. Somebody else is "sweeping" the street. The audience joins the actors in singing the rhythmic folk songs.... What is amazing about such a performance is the complete unity between actors and audience.

Meanwhile a whole "police" unit appears on the square. Burly men immediately get down to business: they hit out with their truncheons, and you hear moans and curses. Representatives of the "authorities" appear under "police" guard. They stupidly and stubbornly repeat the well-worn phrases: "Kaffirs (the contemptuous racist name for black Africans) - are inferior beings. Whites are whites. Blacks have duties - whites have privileges."

But after an initial retreat under "police" pressure the blacks begin to fight back. They disarm the "police." Everyone rejoices over the victory, and they begin to celebrate. The tam-tams beat out the rhythm, and songs of the patriots are sung. In conclusion comes the song of the ANC "Nkosi sikelele Afrika." Then more "police" arrive on the scene. The sound of shots rings out, and the unarmed heroes fall to the ground. The sketch ends with an uprising of political prisoners. They turn out to be among the audience, and they chant: "We are free, but what about thousands like us who still languish in racist prisons? What have you done for their liberation, to abolish the shame of the century - apartheid? Power to the people!"

The echo of the last words has barely faded when the air is rent with the ominous sound of sirens. This time it is real. Somebody has reported the performance to the police station. This time real armoured cars rush to the scene and real policemen in black tunics jump out of them.... The authorities of Capetown were enraged when they learnt that in the very centre of the city a performance of the play "Somewhere on the Border" had been staged. It was an exposé of the provocations of the South African military against neighbouring states. The police dispersed the audience with tear gas and arrested the "violators of public order." Thus a stage sketch was repeated in real life.

An audience of no more than two...

The African theatre is a political theatre. Many of its members take pride in the fact that their activities have been described in South Africa as propaganda. Practically all their performances deal with revolutionary themes: the 3-act play "The Rhythm of Violence" by Lewis Nkosi, Zakes Mda's trilogy "Dark Voices Ring," "Dead End," "We Shall Sing for the Fatherland," and Fatima Dyke's "The First South African," an indictment of racism.

"The Hungry Earth," written and produced by Maishe Maponya, describes the tragic fate of African workers, men without rights. His experimental studio Bahumutsi carries on the traditions of the revolutionary theatre, regarding its task as not to amuse and entertain, but to educate the oppressed masses and raise their political consciousness. That was the main theme of the symposium held some time ago in the Botswana capital. Its motto was "Culture and Resistance." In the course of the discussions progressive writers and figures prominent in the arts Mangane Serote, James Matthews, Nadine Gordimer, Alf Khumalo, Lindiwe Mabuza and others underlined the immense educational significance of South African revolutionary drama, which is an effective weapon in the struggle for a democratic society.

"Our people's theatre can only be political," said Matsemala Manaka. "It would be a sad state of affairs if the theatre of the future democratic South Africa set out to entertain on the Western pattern. We need a realistic, people's theatre, with no desire for profits and without a thought of box office returns."

"The theatre is the motivating force of culture," noted the playwright and actor Zakes Mafokeng, "and politics closely linked with culture are part of everything publicized by the black theatre."

In order to obtain official permission to stage a people's play in South Africa, one has to have superhuman patience and resourcefulness, my old friend John Dhlomo told me. Well in advance of any performance you have to fill out a detailed questionnaire giving a synopsis of the play, listing the actors involved complete with their biographies and political views, and also provide recommendations from white patrons. And the official at the district administrative office has the right not to reply at all to your application. Dhlomo himself was invited several times to the office for an "interview," but in reality merely to be humiliated for the petty claims of the Kaffirs. Once the racist official suggested mockingly that the title of S. Maredi's play "The Bantustans" be changed to "The Flourishing States." The cynical demand was made that all "subversive" parts be removed and assurances given that during the performance there would be no violations of the Riot Assembly Act, which forbids a gathering of more than two people. In other words, if the performance was attended by more than two persons, the company and its leaders could be arrested.

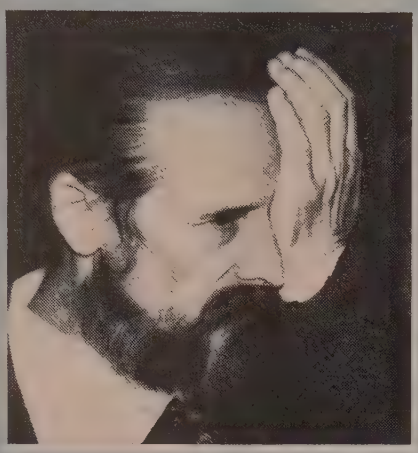
The racists' desire to strangle the African theatre explains why so many of its members are in prison. That is why the popular company Serpent Players from Port Elizabeth had to close down - its leading actors were thrown into the cells of the notorious political prison on Robben Island.

It should, however, be said that on the fringe of the people's theatre, splinter groups have formed - the so-called African show business, which stages lightweight pseudorevolutionary plays. Gibson Kente is a representative of this commercialized form of art. His credo of an apolitical and pure theatre and the alleged indifference of Africans to ideology quickly caught the attention of the authorities, who were interested in a "tame" theatre. But among the people, men like Kente are known as "popeyes" - men who have sold their souls.

But, of course, it is not the "popeyes," nor the stagnating white theatre that determines the development of the national theatre in South Africa. The movement for the revival of Africa's original culture and arts is gaining momentum, despite numerous obstacles and harsh persecution. One can clearly discern the future outlines of the national theatre, with its high sense of civic duty and humanism.

ALEXANDER OSIPOV
Harare

TEN YEARS IN A DEAD END



Ten years ago, having obtained an Israeli visa, Igor Sinyavin, a modernist artist, left the Soviet Union with his family. After six months on the move - from Vienna and then to Rome - he reached New York, the goal that beckoned him. Now he has returned. Why?

We put that question to Igor Sinyavin a few minutes after his plane touched down at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport.

In the past I assessed any situation from the point of how it affected me and to what point I could exercise my rights. I wouldn't put up with anything but what I wanted. Then, back in 1976, when differences with the Soviet authorities had piled up, the wish to leave the Soviet Union was born. Freedom of expression.... In America I had to look at everything differently. And most of all at my attitude to my own country. After two or three years the feeling that I could never return home made it difficult to live, even to breathe. I was cut off from my country, my people, my language.... I never imagined how hard to take that would be. When you can breathe, you think that that is how it will always be, and suddenly you find yourself in a vacuum. It's an awful feeling.

You went to the West in the search of "freedom of self-expression." Did you find it?

What I found in America was bedlam. I was amazed and shaken that I had placed my time and my energy on the altar of inhumanity, amorality and anti-art. Yes, there are outstanding writers, artists and musicians in the United States. But they are for the few. If you do not belong, then your fate is mass culture. If, of course, one can call the cult of violence, pornography and advertising culture. You have to see it every day to understand what it's like.

In the Soviet Union an individual is valued for his ideas, for his aspirations, for his moral principles.... (For a moment Igor Sinyavin was silent. Then, having mastered his emotions, he continued.) Excuse me, but the memories are too painful. There people are judged by the size of their purse. And if you speak of moral, profound values they look at you as if you're an idiot and ask: "How much money will that make you?" And if they see that the answer is none, you don't exist for them. That was when I understood that any Russian cut off from his native land loses his individuality.

What were your first impressions on your arrival in the United States?

If you mean New York, they were negative. That very same day I immediately made my way to Broadway, of which I had a mental picture from American films. But the first thing that caught my eye was not the skyscrapers or the window displays - that came later - but the homeless turning out garbage cans, the police ready for battle with weapons, radio and truncheons, the gloomy alleys, the trains thundering overhead. Noise, dirt, fear....

As for people, to begin with, I kept up ties with dissidents and anti-Soviet elements. I contributed to Posev published by the so-called Popular Labour Alliance, the monarchist newspaper Nasha Strana and other anti-Soviet publications. But all that came to an end when I stopped taking part in their campaigns and publishing articles with views coinciding with theirs. Only those of my countrymen remained my friends who had realized the tragic mistake they had made.

In the United States you showed your work at several exhibitions. Did your paintings sell?

On the whole I could not make a living out of my art. In Washington, for instance, the exhibition to which I had contributed eight paintings suddenly disappeared without trace. I hired a lawyer, appealed to the police - all to no avail. Complete lawlessness. A world in which the main law is the law of the jungle. Of course I could have shown work at exhibitions by émigré artists. But I had to share their political views, in effect turn anti-Soviet. That I could not do. I did manage to sell a few paintings, but not enough to live on. For a living I worked as a loader, house painter and, recently, did flat repairs. My wife's wages were a great help, she changed from teaching Russian to bookkeeping.

You have two children, who have to all intents and purposes grown up in America. Aren't you afraid that they will find it hard to adjust to our way of life, our culture?

On the contrary. It was there that we feared for them. We were even afraid to let them out of the house alone. We feared they would become immersed in American culture, full of pornography and advertising. Russia is in their hearts.

Is it possible that you will again be disillusioned and will ask to go back?

No. I have outgrown the psychology of the eternal dissident and caviller. The time has come to ask myself: what have I myself done that is of use to my country?

Do you feel you have returned as anything but a hero?

That's hard to say.... I went in search of the truth. Subjectively I did not betray Russia, but objectively there was a betrayal.... The West's desire to slander our country, to destroy it, is so evident there. You see and hear it every day. Here that is hard to understand. You have only one home country. And if a person does not repent, has understood nothing, then he is a traitor, I did and I came back.

What was the reaction in émigré circles to your decision to return?

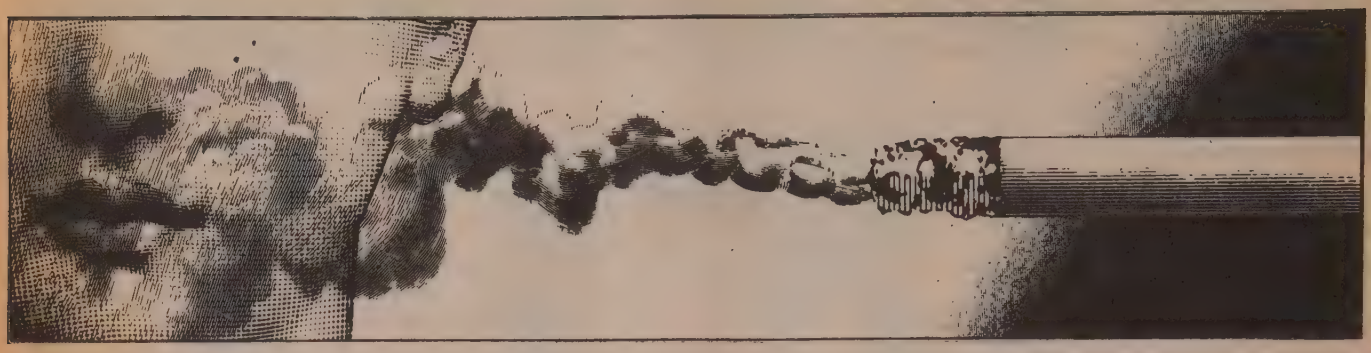
Some advised me: "Take a rope with you. If you decide to hang yourself, you won't be able to buy one." Another said through his teeth: "Russia is one huge prison." I couldn't stop myself asking: "Were you imprisoned for life?" "No," he replied, "ten years." "What for?" "Murder...."

But there were probably others who reacted differently?

Yes. They begged only one thing: "Don't come back."

Interviewed by
VLADIMIR GALIN and
OLEG OSIPOV

Photo by V. Poznyak



No smoking is safe smoking

In the United States, you often see groups of people smoking self-consciously on a pavement or, for example, on a narrow balcony. Most American business owners do not allow smoking "on the premises," and those who are dying for a "drag" have to indulge their habit out-of-doors. Private companies rule against smoking on the job in 12 states and nearly 150 municipalities. Some companies do not take on smokers at all: they cost the employer an average of 1,000 dollars each a year. For instance, smokers are on sick leave for an annual average of two months longer than non-smokers. Still, you cannot throw all the smokers out - there are plenty of talented people among them - so employers are looking for compromise solutions. Some offer a two-dollar weekly pay rise to those who give up. Other offer "abstainers" a 500-dollar extraordinary allowance and a month's leave. The chairman of the board of the Greyhound Corp. in Phoenix - one of the companies that forbid indoor smoking - even shows, by way of persuasion, feats of fitness by walking all the way up to his 18-storey office every morning, and encourages "stair-climbing" competitions.

It is no longer fashionable to smoke. Many American university graduates and young white-collar workers consider smoking a disgusting habit. Some "extremists" who do not believe in the power of persuasion snatch cigarettes from smokers' mouths in the streets, and tar tobacconists' shops.

Pressure on nicotine addicts is mounting. The public insisting on its right to breathe air free of tobacco smoke has had smoking banned in public places, at railway stations, entertainment and sports centres. Certain U.S., Canadian, Norwegian and Finnish airlines ban smoking on their domestic routes. The French authorities have restricted smoking to 35 per cent of the total train and plane space. In Australia and Canada, smoking is to be banned in all government institutions by 1988. The Norwegians are demanding that the sale of tobacco goods be placed under state control and cigarette prices raised. Cigarettes are to be totally withdrawn from the market by 1995, and towards the year 2000 the country's air is to be cleared of tobacco smoke. Later, entry restrictions will be imposed: if a Swedish student, for instance, wants a scholarship to an Oslo higher school, he'll have to give up smoking because

EXPERT COMMENT

LYDIA BOGDANOVICH, D. Sc. (Medicine)

As long as the tobacco monopolies continue to make fabulous profits, the anti-smoking campaign in the West can hardly be expected to bring impressive results. The British companies, for instance, make from 70 to 90 million dollars a year on selling cigarettes to children of 11-16 alone! We are under no advertising pressure from tobacco manufacturers. Cigarette packets even carry a warning from the U.S.S.R. Health Ministry that smoking is a health hazard. Nonetheless, boys take up smoking often as early as at 12 years of age in our country. In the 16-year-old age bracket, more than 40 per cent of boys smoke. Girls often start patronizing tobacconists' shops at 14.

It should be pointed out that nicotine affects the health even of unborn babies. An expectant mother who smokes gives birth to a baby of subnormal weight and lowered immunity. Such babies are twice as susceptible as normal ones to bronchitis, pneumonia and other lung and respiratory diseases. The incidence of allergic disorders caused by carcinogenic substances is comparatively high among children today.

Nicotin is a psychotropic agent. If used regularly, it becomes habit-forming, and daily intake constantly increases.

Let's face it: although it is forbidden to smoke in public places here, our children smoke at school! It is worth counting cigarette butts in school toilets and drawing the appropriate conclusions....

Schoolchildren must be exposed to anti-smoking propaganda from the age of 10-11 by including special classes in the curriculum. Television can be of help in discouraging children from smoking. An important point to consider is that to many children smoking is the only form of socializing. Our schools provide no leisure facilities. School workshops and gyms close after classes, and children are left to their own devices.

Our medicine has next to nothing to offer those wishing to stop smoking - except, perhaps, the gamibazinum chewing gum which is almost unavailable.

Can we manage without medicine? Where there's a will there's a way. Let's try and hammer it home to children that every cigarette shortens the smoker's life by seven minutes!

the scholarship distribution commission gives preference to non-smokers.

Under the massive pressure the number of smokers is dwindling. Moreover, anti-smoking propaganda is becoming more and more ingenious. Statistics can be frightening in themselves. Smoking-related diseases kill 25,000 Frenchmen, about 30,000 Canadians, 100,000 Brazilians and over 500,000 Americans a year. A special robot has been designed as a visual aid. Smoking Sam looks like a boy of 14. His transparent lungs are filled with glass fibres. When a lighted cigarette is put in his mouth, the robot begins to inhale deeply, and onlookers see how nicotine and other poisonous products of burning tobacco accumulate in his lungs: a ghastly sight. A legend explains that a smoker inhales carbon monoxide, hydrocyanide, nitrogen dioxide, benzol, acetaldehyde, toluene, nickel, cadmium, benzopyrene, radioactive polonium-210.... In all, scientists have detected about 4,000 components in tobacco-burning products.

Surely any adult is free to decide whether or not to poison his organism. But the point is that a smoker is by no means harmless to those around him. A non-smoker associating with smokers runs as high a risk as they do of contracting bronchial troubles, emphysema and lung cancer. After all, a smoker inhales only a quarter of the gases that form in his cigarette, while the rest escape into the air. The smoke from a cigarette left in an ashtray is still more toxic. Having spent an hour in the company of several smokers indoors, a non-smoker absorbs as many carcinogenic substances as someone who has had 10-15 cigarettes out-of-doors, and becomes three times more susceptible to lung cancer.

In Britain alone, lung cancer caused by "passive smoking" kills 200 persons a year. In the F.R.G. "passive smoking" is listed as an occupational disease. And in Sweden, a court of appeal of the social security system ruled that compensation be paid to the family of a fatal lung cancer case, pronouncing her a victim of a 20-year association with her smoking colleagues and describing her death as the result of an occupational injury. The non-smokers of San Francisco have secured the right to demand that anyone smoking on the job put out his cigarette. Failure to comply carries a 500-dollar fine. In Poland and Yugoslavia those caught smoking in public are also heavily fined.

But if you take cigarettes away from an inveterate smoker, he experiences discomfort and develops what are known as withdrawal symptoms. Nevertheless, about half of such addicts wish to give up the habit. Can medicine help them do so?

French pharmaceutical chemists sell nicotine chewing gum. It contains a mere

2 milligrams of nicotine and has a soothing effect on the nervous system. As distinct from tobacco smoke, it is noncarcinogenic.

In Zurich, the Swiss anti-cancer league has organized a round-the-clock phone-in service. Callers are enlighted on various techniques of giving up nicotine and offered a course of special treatment. Another novelty, also developed in Zurich, is a metal ring which, when worn on the helix of the ear, acts on the nervous system in a special way. The inventors guarantee 9 smokers out of 10 a certain cure in a mere 30-40 days.

The method suggested by experts in Singapore is based on the secrets of Chinese medicine. Five or six flashes of a laser beam directed at a certain point on the patient's ear make him indifferent to cigarettes, with the result that he stops smoking.

Unfortunately, the ranks of smokers are hardly thinning at all as more and more schoolchildren acquire the habit, although in most Western countries youngsters under 16 are forbidden to smoke. In Canada, for instance, 13 per cent of girls and 9 per cent of boys take up smoking when they are barely 14. Teenage smoking is fostered by a far-flung network of cigarette-vending machines and colourful advertising. It is true that in the U.S. and the Common Market countries cigarette advertising on television has been banned. But tobacco monopolies are not going to lay down arms and spare no expense on promoting their wares. They spend two billion of their annual 32-billion-dollar profits on "hidden persuasion," plus a further billion on sponsoring sports festivals and motor races which culminate in free cigarette handouts.

As a result, 3,500 Americans under 16 light up their first cigarettes every day.

TATYANA SEVASTYANOVA

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INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

1917-1987

(final announcement)

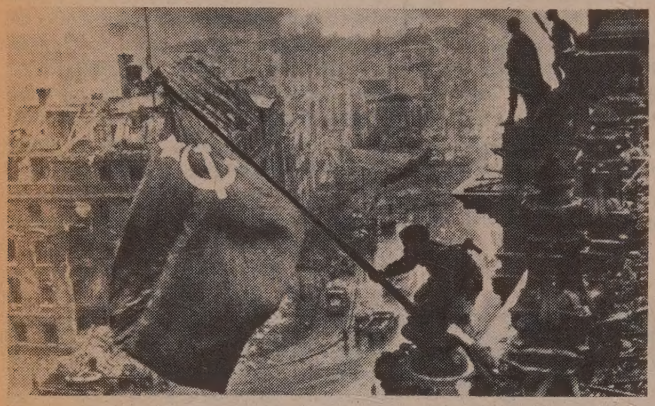
Dear readers!

The Editors of New Times invite you to take part in a quiz on the subject of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The quiz contains seven questions. You can send in your answers as soon as you are ready to do so, but they should arrive in Moscow not later than October 15.

The two top prizes are visits to the Soviet Union sponsored by our magazine. They will take in Moscow and a union republic chosen by the individual winner.

We shall also award 4 second, 8 third and 50 consolation prizes.



Question One. What was the first decree of the Soviet government? What did it proclaim and who was its author?

Question Two. When was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics created? Which were the first Soviet republics to join the Union? How many union republics, autonomous republics, autonomous regions and areas are there in the U.S.S.R.?

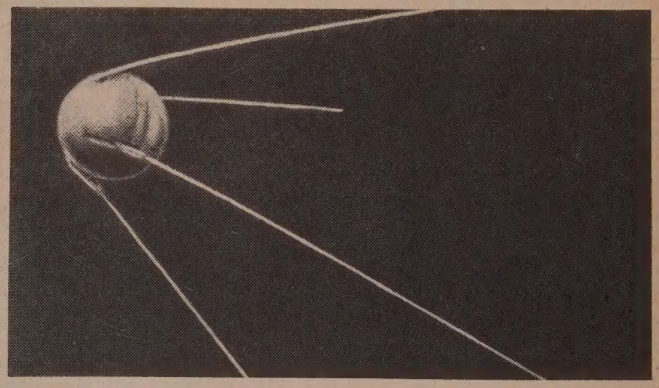
Question Three. What years were covered by the first five-year plan for the economic development of the U.S.S.R.? In how many years was it fulfilled?

Question Four. What episode from the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) is shown in this photograph? How many Soviet citizens died in the war?

Question Five. In what year was the first artificial earth satellite put into orbit? In what year did the first man go into space? What do you know about him? How many Soviet cosmonauts have been in space?

Question Six. What are the stages provided for in the programme for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000 put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev on January 15, 1986?

Question Seven. What other Soviet peace initiatives of recent years do you know of?



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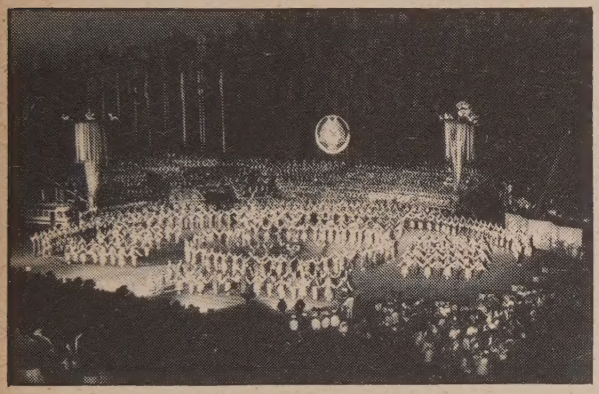
THE BALTIKA FESTIVAL

For a whole week the city of Vilnius looked like a huge concert-hall stage. Its streets resounded with the strains of country music, polkas, waltzes and quadrilles. An international folk art festival of the Baltic countries was on.

Folk art has always been extremely popular with the Lithuanians who imbibe its traditions since early childhood. Nearly all the large plants in the republic have first-rate song and dance ensembles with thousands of folk art enthusiasts of all ages and professions taking part in them.

Over three thousand amateur performers from Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, the Russian Federation and some foreign countries got together in Vilnius for a new folk art festival called Baltika. According to preliminary estimates, their concerts were attended by about a third of the city's residents. A village fête was held in the Rumsiskes open-air ethnic museum.

The Baltika will be formally registered with the UNESCO International Committee of Organizers of Folklore Festivals. From now on, it will be held in the capital of one of the Soviet Baltic republics, every summer.



A festival participant.

At a concert.

A village fête held in the Rumsiskes open-air ethnic museum.

Inhabitants from nearby villages treat French singers and dancers to local delicacies.

Photos by Alexander Ratnikov

Waiting.

Everything for tourists.

INTERNATIONAL
CONTEST

MAN AND MANKIND

Mayra A. Martinez
(Cuba)

ИНДЕКС 70622 НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ